

# RECENT HISTORY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

1965 - 1980



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ИСТОРИЯ РАБОЧЕГО ДВИЖЕНИЯ В США  
В НОВЕЙШЕЕ ВРЕМЯ

ТОМ ТРЕТИЙ  
(1965-1980)

На английском языке

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The book, a sequel to two volumes under the same title, deals with the labor movement in the USA against the background of domestic and foreign political events in the period from 1965 to 1980.

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## PREFACE

The present publication is a sequel to the 2-volume joint effort *Recent History of the Labor Movement in the United States, 1918-1965*. It covers the period between 1965 and 1980.

Those were the years when important events took place both in the USA and in the whole world. The economy of the capitalist countries developed extremely unevenly, going through a series of ups and downs, and in the mid-1970s a major economic crisis broke out largely reminiscent of the Great Depression of the early 1930s. A characteristic trait of the 1974-1975 crisis was that it came to a head under the conditions of further deepening of the overall crisis of capitalism, at a period marked by further consolidation and dynamic development of the world socialist system, actual liquidation of the colonial system, and the loss by imperialism of its former control over the major sources of raw materials and energy.

In the USA itself, the growth in the contradictions and instability of the economy was determined by a high level of militarization, the arms race, accelerated monopolization of industry, unprecedented concentration of production and centralization of capital, emergence of enormous transnational corporations, further development of state-monopoly capitalism and the military-industrial complex, and US interference in the economic and political life of other countries.

In the USA, production was on the decline, a process which spread to the steel industry, shipbuilding and construction. This resulted in disruptions in capital reproduction. State

regulation was unable to keep in check the elemental forces of capitalist economy. The prices of oil and mineral raw materials rose sharply. The dollar was devalued, and inflation set in, with a resultant critical situation in the international monetary system. A financial crisis broke out, complemented by an energy crisis; there was a trend toward a reduction in world trade, and contradictions became more acute between the three centers of world capital—the USA, Japan and Western Europe.

In the USA, just as in other capitalist countries, unemployment peaked, becoming mass and permanent. The army of the unemployed was now 9 million strong. The economic crisis of 1974-1975 put paid to the myth of "affluent society" and the technocratic illusion of omnipotent state regulation. The predictions of bourgeois economists concerning crisis-free development of capitalist economy proved untenable.

The end of the economic crisis in the USA was not accompanied by the expected upsurge: the rate of economic development fell, and then a tendency toward a new decline became apparent. Inflation did not cease, continuing to feed the Americans' uncertainty about the future. At the same time, the profits of the monopolies were growing. While in the years of crisis they amounted to \$67 billion (after taxes), in 1979 they reached \$144 billion. In the last 10 years of the period, corporate profits grew 3-fold, and not only through price rises, credit manipulation, and inflation growth, but also due to the sweating system.

The soaring profits of the corporations and the worsening living standards of the working people discredited the promises of the White House to overcome economic difficulties in the eyes of ordinary Americans. Reality implacably showed the incompatibility of the interests of the people and of the monopolies, it showed that the social contradictions between them were inevitable, irreconcilable and unavoidable. The mood of the masses was indifferent and apathetic. A credibility gap developed, which was aggravated by President Lyndon B. Johnson's policy of expanding US aggression in Vietnam. The Watergate affair showed the high extent of corruption and customary violations of law in the highest administration circles. That affair ended in a profound political crisis and President Nixon's resignation.

The Carter administration failed to overcome the credibility

gap. In his television speech in July 1979, the President had to admit that the credibility gap struck at the very heart, soul and spirit of the national will, creating a serious threat to the American way of life. In the President's words, the declining faith in the future was fraught with the danger to America's social and political system, to the social institutions, the system of private enterprise, and the Constitution of the USA. There was an obvious growth in disrespect for the government, the church, the schools, the mass media, and other institutions.

The spirit of crisis also manifested itself in the voters' falling interest in federal and local elections, and their disenchantment in the election procedures. The voters' absenteeism was a most convincing proof of growing social pessimism. The majority of those refusing to vote were Blacks, members of ethnic minorities, workers and young people.

In the 1980 election, the Democratic Party suffered a major defeat, and President Carter—a complete political fiasco. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans could put forward a positive program for solving the socio-economic problems facing the country during the presidential election. In his State of the Union address and in a number of other statements Ronald Reagan admitted that the American economy was in a mess and that decisive measures would have to be taken to put it back in shape.

The Reagan administration, accepting the unprecedented growth of inflation, the existence of masses of the unemployed, the devaluation of the dollar, the excessive taxation and the drop in labor productivity, announced cuts in welfare spending. Simultaneously, the military budget was increased. The anti-labor orientation of the Reagan policy became obvious during the air-traffic controllers' strike for better wages. The administration meted out severe reprisals against them. Many union leaders and rank-and-file strikers were imprisoned, and more than 10,000 dismissed.

President Reagan's policies aroused a wave of indignation. On Labor Day (the first Monday in September), working people took to the streets. Protest demonstrations were held throughout the country. In New York alone, 200,000 took part in the demonstration, calling on all Americans to fight against the reactionary policies that worsened the position of average Americans and exacerbated the social con-

traditions in the country. Even the top AFL-CIO leadership, breaking the tradition, accepted the suggestion of the Federation's Executive Council not to invite Reagan to the next AFL-CIO convention in protest against his anti-labor policies. Walter Mondale, former US Vice-President, said in his speech at the AFL-CIO convention in November 1981 that he would be hard put to name another president in US history who had done as much to spoil the relations with the labor unions.

The 1960s were marked by a further consolidation of the international positions of socialism and the emergence of a new military-strategic and political situation in the world. That compelled sober-minded Western politicians to take a new look at the development of world events. Many of them spoke in favor of peaceful coexistence between the two social systems and of normalization and restructuring the international relations. In the search for reasonable approaches to world problems, the more extremist groups were being isolated.

The first half of the 1970s went down in the history of international relations as a time when a healthier atmosphere set in, cold war receded, detente came, the principles of peaceful coexistence were widely accepted and favorable conditions emerged for the settlement of disputes through talks. Of immense significance in this connection was the Peace Program worked out by the 24th and 25th Congresses of the CPSU and consistently implemented by the Soviet Union.

The process of detente began in Europe, which had gone through the tragedy of two world wars. This was followed by a normalization of the relations between the USSR and the USA. Important agreements were concluded, including those on the prevention of nuclear war and implementation of certain measures on limiting strategic offensive weapons. The two sides recognized that continued peace and peaceful coexistence were equally necessary and profitable to the USSR and the USA.

World events showed that detente was in the interests of the peoples and that there was a pressing need for complementing political detente with a relaxation of military tension. After lengthy talks, the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-2) was signed in 1979 between the USSR and the USA.

However, the expanding process of detente greatly disturbed imperialist strategists, whose hopes for the weaken-

ing of the positions of world socialism were dashed. The world revolutionary process continued. The forces of progress were making fresh advances. The socialist community was further strengthening, making an increasingly positive impact on world developments. The most adventurist militarist forces therefore stepped up their resistance to international detente. Certain factors within the USA contributed to that. In the mid-1970s, it was especially manifest that the USA was a society suffering from deep and incurable social diseases and irreconcilable contradictions. The credibility gap coincided with a decline in US international prestige. Early in 1977, President Carter stated that one of the goals of his foreign policy would be to assert America's moral leadership. In July 1977, he said that the United States must appear in a favorable light before the world.

To attain these goals, Washington began a large-scale propaganda campaign abroad touting the so-called "American way of life", and a "human rights" campaign. The latter was intended to draw the Americans' attention away from domestic socio-economic problems, to gain support for the expansionist foreign policy of the USA, to make it look morally sound and to stimulate anti-communist attitudes by spreading crude fabrications about the socialist countries. Simultaneously, the mass media were put to work spreading the myth of a "Soviet military threat".

All of this proved to be the ideological groundwork for a counteroffensive by the reactionary and militarist circles of the USA against detente, peace and the rights of the peoples of other countries, and for stepping up the arms race and aggravating international tension. These tendencies became especially strong in the late 1970s and early 1980s, on the eve of the presidential election and later with the coming of the Reagan administration to power.

In December 1979, ignoring the historically conditioned changes and intending to disrupt the existing military-strategic parity, the US ruling circles thrust on their NATO allies a plan for stationing new American medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe, and later openly stated their readiness to resort to these weapons. Whole regions were declared to be spheres of US vital interests. The view was expressed beyond the Atlantic that a "limited" nuclear war would be acceptable for Europe.

The Reagan administration adopted the policy of stepping up the arms race, of aggravating international tension, and of open anti-Sovietism. Its methods in the relations with other countries offer numerous instances of crude interference in the internal affairs of other states and suppression of national liberation movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Caspar Weinberger, US Secretary of Defense, has openly stated that the positions of the USA in the world must be strengthened by force of arms. The American government saw attainment of military superiority over the Soviet Union as its prime task. The USA would spend anything that was needed to increase America's military power and to obtain advantage over the Soviet Union, stated Weinberger.

The US administration openly declared its aims of increasing strategic armaments; it started building a new series of intercontinental ballistic missiles, of strategic air-, sea- and ground-based cruise missiles, and also initiated mass production of neutron weapons and a huge increase in the stockpiling of chemical weapons.

The Soviet Union has taken a decisive stand for the continuation and deepening of detente and against the aggravation of international tension and the arms race. Guided by the decisions of the 26th Congress of the CPSU and the Peace Program for the 1980s it approved, the Soviet government persistently implements the policy of consolidating peace and security of nations in collaboration with other socialist countries. Defending the cause of peace has now become the most pressing and vital task of all the peace-loving countries and peoples.

A great responsibility for preserving peace devolves on the American people, and particularly the multi-million US working class, which has had considerable experiences in the struggle for democracy, social progress and peace. One example of that was the broad anti-war movement against the US aggression in South-East Asia.

In the period under consideration, the US labor movement developed in a complex and tense situation, both domestically and internationally. The nature and intensity of the class struggle were determined by many socio-economic and political factors. The dynamics of the struggle was uneven: there were rises and falls, victories and defeats. Serious changes occurred in the working class itself and in its attitude to the

power of big business. New tendencies emerged in the actions of the proletariat against the dominance of the monopolies.

The scientific and technological revolution, radically transforming the material basis of production and the character of human labor, noticeably changes the structure of the working class. The emergence and rapid development of new industries resulted in serious shifts in the correlation of various branches of social production and, correspondingly, in the structure of employment. Manpower had to be shifted around the country, and changes occurred in the functions and composition of various sections of the work force and in the level and character of their skills. New skills had to be mastered and new demands on general education and professional training emerged. The need for greater numbers of skilled specialists grew.

According to statistical data, a third of the American working class is employed in the manufacturing and mining industries and in civil engineering. A considerable number of hired workers are involved in military production. There is a growing tendency toward a relative decrease in the number of persons engaged mainly in manual labor. This category of workers, the blue collars, grows in the service industry in tune with the overall growth of the white-collar group. Rank-and-file employees constitute the greatest portion, engineers and technical specialists come second, followed by managerial and commercial personnel. Structural changes in production technology, automation in particular, bring about changes in the professional composition of the working class and its distribution in the various branches of the economy.

The changes taking place in the structure of the working class set before the labor movement the tasks of increasing the level of organization, of working out new programmatic demands, of formulating the slogans and the tactics to suit the existing situation which would unite the workers. Unity of various sections of the working class assumes prime importance.

The offensive mounted by monopoly capital, and its efforts to shift the burden of economic difficulties, above all the burden of the crisis and inflation, onto the shoulders of the working people, meet with resistance from the masses. The

recent decades have been marked by a growth in the strike movement. Workers demand higher wages and government measures against runaway inflation. At present, the class struggle in the USA is marked by a tendency among the progressive workers and trade unions to go beyond the purely economic demands, adding socio-political ones to them.

Ever broader masses of the population are involved in the anti-monopoly and democratic movement.

Rank-and-file union members speak out more often and more resolutely against their right-wing leaders following an opportunistic line in dealing with employers and often justifying and supporting Washington's expansionist moves in foreign policy. The union movement was adversely affected by the George Meany reactionary group, which headed for a quarter of a century the country's major union center, the AFL-CIO, implementing a policy of class collaboration, helping Washington in its anti-labor policy, interfering with the drawing of unorganized workers in the unions, supporting Washington's aggressive plans and the arms race on an extended scale and opposing detente. Most members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council shared Meany's views.

Lane Kirkland, the present chairman of the AFL-CIO, continues Meany's reactionary policy and, in Gus Hall's words, comes out as "one of the most outspoken advocates of bloated military budgets, war production and military superiority over the Soviet Union". But he cannot ignore the workers' mood, their protest against the administration's measures, as, for instance, during the air-traffic controllers' strike.

Political development in the country and the world compel the AFL-CIO leaders to resort to maneuvering. This helps the US ruling circles to keep the better organized part of the working class under the influence of bourgeois ideology, dampening the social tensions in the country. It will be appropriate to recall that the American bourgeoisie has a powerful arsenal of economic, political and ideological means of influencing the masses. It makes skillful use of various devices to split the working class, setting the unorganized workers against the organized.

The Communist Party USA consistently defends the interests of the working people, indefatigably consolidating its ranks. It aims to extend its links with the workers in major

industries, to overcome divisions within the working class and to unite progressive and democratic forces in the struggle against monopoly capital. The Communists expose the anti-democratic character of the ruling circles' policy. They resolutely come out against the expansionist foreign policy of the American imperialists and the arms race and advocate relaxation of international tension and settlement of all issues through negotiations. US Communists firmly adhere to the positions of internationalism, resolutely opposing all kinds of revisionism and opportunism.

Many books have been published in the USA about the working class, the conditions of its work and life, economic position, the structural changes brought about by the scientific and technological revolution, and the nature of the labor movement at the present stage. This literature contains considerable documentary and factual materials and presents a wide spectrum of the views of bourgeois authors on the labor movement. The purpose of this literature in class terms is to obscure the vices of capitalism, to prove the immutability of the existing social structure, to attenuate the contradictions and belittle the scope of the class struggle, and to persuade the reader that no radical social reforms are necessary, and that partial reforms, leaving the foundations of capitalism intact, are acceptable.

Bourgeois economists, sociologists and historians usually propound the thesis that the working class turns bourgeois under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution and that it is integrated in the capitalist system. Concepts of alleged transformation and erosion of the proletariat, of its becoming a "new middle class", are widespread. Sociologists and historians endeavor to prove that in the recent decades the numerical strength of the proletariat has steadily decreased. They try to isolate many strata and groups of hired workers from the working class, to discredit the historical role of its liberation struggle, to shake the workers' faith in their own strength and to prevent them from fulfilling their mission in the struggle for social transformation of society.

The apologists of capitalism exploit certain specific features of the formation of proletarian consciousness. They often reduce the labor movement to the purely economic, trade-unionist forms of struggle, rejecting the importance of the democratic organizations of working people, often contriving

to set the interests of some workers' groups against others, and one-sidedly presenting the history of labor unions and their role in the country's political life.

Some authors, mostly those representing "new labor history", largely concentrate on the life and activities of unorganized workers. Opposing the concepts of the Commons school, they endeavor to overcome its institutionalist trend toward limiting the labor movement to the activities of the top union officials upholding "business", or "pure" unionism. New methods of research are used, including quantitative, concrete sociological, demographic and socio-psychological ones. The computer-processing of extensive concrete historical materials, particularly of statistical data, is a positive fact. It extends our knowledge of the workers' living conditions, their social psychology and formation of their consciousness. But excessive stress on these methods and exaggeration of their importance in research sometimes lead to one-sided and unscientific conclusions. Some proponents of the "new labor history" declare this trend to be an alternative to Marxism.

A number of American historians are dissatisfied with the general state of the bourgeois historiography of the labor movement in the USA. Thus, Lee Benson in his *Toward the Scientific Study of History*,<sup>1</sup> published in 1972, expressed his dissatisfaction with the predominant subjectivism of such works, their descriptive approach to social phenomena and unwillingness to make generalizations. He pointed out that some authors confine themselves to mere fact-collecting, making no attempt at an in-depth analysis; they do not strive to reveal the general trends and patterns in the labor movement.

The labor movement in the USA is a field of acute ideological struggle between Marxist and bourgeois historiographies. US Marxist historians have always placed great emphasis on the study and generalization of the experiences of the American proletariat's class struggle. Their books and articles show the untenability of bourgeois authors' allegations that social contradictions between labor and capital are losing their edge, that the activity of the working class is on the wane and the strike movement declines. In the difficult

<sup>1</sup> L. Benson, *Toward the Scientific Study of History*, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1972, pp. 101, 114.

struggle between labor and capital, they see their task in helping workers, to use Lenin's words, to develop "an understanding of the significance of their movement and a thorough knowledge of it".<sup>1</sup>

The history of the labor movement in the USA is one of the major directions in Soviet American studies. A great number of books and scholarly papers have been published on the subject. Using extensive documentary and factual materials, Soviet historians show the broad panorama of the American people's struggle for democracy and social progress. The working class plays the dominant role in this anti-monopoly movement; it is in the center of the country's socio-political life, and the future belongs to it. Labor unions' attitudes on US foreign policy are given considerable attention in these works.

The purpose of the present volume is to provide an all-round survey of the social, ideological and political development of the US working class and to show, using concrete historical materials, the leading tendencies and most important traits of the overall labor, union and communist movements in the country at the present stage. At the same time, the authors have tried to show the social and economic impact of the scientific and technological revolution on the working class and the structural changes taking place in it. Considerable attention is given to the specific features of the struggle of the proletariat against the monopolies at the present stage, to analysis of the strike movement, its dynamics and character.

The role of labor unions in the country's political life, their participation in election campaigns, the behavior of the right-wing union leaders and their conciliatory tactics during strikes and other actions by the working class figure prominently in the volume, because the character and the specific features of the labor movement in the USA cannot be fully understood without an all-round consideration of such questions.

It is a major task of the present work to throw light on the movement at the grass roots level, on the working-class attitudes on the problems of Black Americans and their struggle for civil rights and social justice. The reader will find

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Working Class and Its Press", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 363.



here descriptions of the desperate struggle of the Afro-Americans for freedom, against racism and oppression. At the end of the 1960s, the country found itself in the grip of Black uprisings. The ruling circles cruelly suppressed the rebellions, using National Guard units, regular troops and police.

There is a special chapter on the activities of the Communist Party USA which consistently defends the interests of the working class, consolidates its links with and increases its influence among the union movement, among the intelligentsia and young people, and advocates a general democratic front against big business domination, for peace and detente.

The book also discusses the interaction of the international and national aspects in the class struggle of the American proletariat and the growing role of progressive organizations in the country's general democratic movement.

Just as the previous two volumes, the present one offers a survey of the historiography of the labor movement in the USA. A special chapter critically evaluates a number of works by bourgeois authors published in the period under consideration, and provides a survey of the Marxist literature on the US labor movement published in the USA and in the Soviet Union.

This joint effort is thus multidimensional. It attempts to analyze extensive documentary and factual materials, to generalize the accumulated experiences of the working class of the USA and, relying on the achievements of Marxist historiography, to show the working class's position on basic issues of US politics.

## CHAPTER I

### US ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE LABOR POLICY OF US RULING CIRCLES

#### Economic Factors of the Deepening Crisis of American Capitalism

In the last two decades, new developments have taken place in the crisis of the US economic and socio-political structure. Contradictions in all spheres of American society's life have intensified. The "American dream" and the "hopes for happiness" cultivated by the instruments of the ideological brainwashing of the popular masses are being shattered by the harsh reality of increased organization of the reactionary forces, economic exploitation and non-economic compulsion.

*Political Affairs*, the theoretical organ of the Communist Party USA, has pointed out that the crisis problems are "basically ... the problems of a system in decay and decline".<sup>1</sup> The contradictions between the interests of the people and the entire system of state-monopoly capitalism have become more acute. On the international scene, the economic, scientific-technological and military power of the USA is openly and cynically used against the peoples of other countries, especially the developing ones, and against national liberation and international working-class movements. At the same time, it is an unambiguous warning for the US partners within the framework of the so-called "Atlantic solidarity". The strategy of the domestic and foreign policy of the US ruling circles, the evolution of their instruments of influencing the interrelations between the social classes, along with other internal and external political factors, are largely determined by the serious changes beginning in that country's basis, in the

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, December 1979, p. 1.

nature of the economic relations both on the international scene and within the USA.

The main trend in these changes is the increasing role of the economic factors in the crisis of American capitalism. We witness a weakening of its positions in the competitive struggle among the imperialist powers. In the socio-economic sphere, where virtually all social contradictions arise, class antagonisms become stronger.

The features of the growing decay of the foundations of capitalism characteristic of the USA were pointed out already by Lenin. He wrote that owing to the powerful and rapid development of the productive forces in the USA accompanied by just as rapid growth in material and social inequality, "the parasitic features of modern American capitalism have stood out with particular prominence".<sup>1</sup> The new historical conditions accelerated the development of these tendencies. At present, the country which claims the role of the bulwark and defender of the last antagonistic exploiting formation shows most clearly the sores and vices of imperialism.

Those bourgeois authors who would have still liked to view the economic and social development of the USA as an unprecedented historical phenomenon, distort the essence of the scientific and technological progress and its influence on capitalist production relations. Fresh versions of quasi-scientific technocratic concepts of "post-industrial" and "technetronic" society keep appearing in the USA. They declare American society to be the "ideal model" and a "social laboratory" for the development of the whole mankind. A kind of technocratic utopia based on the philosophy of pragmatism is formulated.

These concepts are used to embellish American capitalism in its last, decaying phase, passing it for a qualitatively new society. "Our society," Zbigniew Brzezinski asserts, "ceasing to be an industrial society ... is being shaped to an ever-increasing extent by technology and electronics, and thus becoming the first *technetronic society*."<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois ideologists assert that the capitalist forms of the scientific and technological revolution and its consequences are a great boon not

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Republic*, December 23, 1967, p. 18.

only for the ruling class but also for the whole of the American people. In reality, these developments gave rise to economic and socio-political problems which even the most powerful imperialist state is incapable of solving.

The chronic economic problems include the underloading of production facilities, and the shortening of the upsurge—depression—crisis cycles.

In the socio-political sphere, the control of the monopoly elite is intensified over all the institutions of state power, and the state is widely used for non-economic coercion of the working people and its more sophisticated combination with economic exploitation.

The class ruling American society, and in the first place its top monopoly circles, endeavoring to consolidate its positions in the inter-imperialist struggle and in the historical confrontation of the two socio-economic systems, especially counts on the maximal use of the attainments offered by the continuing scientific and technological revolution. The present STR level demonstrates qualitatively new aspects in the historical development of social production. But the progressive character of the STR under state-monopoly capitalism is considerably slowed down by the constraints of the capitalist production relations.

The subordination of the STR to the subjective self-seeking goals of monopoly capital creates an insurmountable obstacle in utilizing the advantages it creates for economic and social progress. The STR, stimulating to an extent the development of productive forces and the improvement of hired labor, facilitates thereby the deepening of the economic and social contradictions and a clearer demarcation of class interests, aggravating the crisis of American capitalism.

Lenin wrote: "Capitalist technology is increasingly, day by day, *outgrowing* the social conditions which condemn the working people to wage-slavery."<sup>1</sup> The present stage in the scientific and technological progress fully confirms this conclusion. The immense scope of the concentration and socialization of production lends new features to the conflict be-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "A Great Technical Achievement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 62.

tween the developing productive forces and the historically obsolescent production relations.

Under the conditions of a scientific and technological revolution, the utmost monopolization and centralization of production and capital deepens and extends the social contradictions, particularly because the monopolies endeavor to intensify the exploitation of hired labor, drawing into it the overwhelming majority of the population from the most diverse social strata and classes. State-monopoly regulation of labor relations has been further developed—in the interests of the monopolists, of course. That process shows most clearly the need for a modification of the methods of controlling society worked out by the mechanism of American state-monopoly capitalism. These processes bear evidence to the fact that American “exceptionalism”, which bourgeois propaganda is never tired to extoll, is manifested in practice merely in the exceptional depth and acuteness of the contradictions with which both the basis and the superstructure institutions of US state-monopoly capitalism are stricken.

This is graphically borne out by the fact that the spreading process of the merging of the American state apparatus with the giant power of monopoly capital has resulted in the strengthening of militarism, and at a qualitatively new level, at that. The military-industrial complex has become the most important part of the entire state-monopoly mechanism. It now not only determines to a great extent the performance of the branches producing armaments but also controls the material and financial resources of the country as a whole.

Catering to it, the state permanently increases the expenditures for armaments, for maintaining military bases abroad, and for aiding reactionary regimes. In 1965, these expenditures amounted to \$72.3 billion, while in 1978 they rose to \$179.1 billion. In the 1970s, US military spending amounted to about a trillion dollars, while in the following decade it is planned to spend three times as much. All of this contributes significantly to the growth of the state debt, cuts in social welfare spending, and increased inflation; between 70 and 75 per cent of all government orders are won by the biggest corporations producing arms. Each year, they gobble up some \$200 billion from the federal treasury.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, September 1981, p. 5.

In his day Lenin wrote of militarism as a result of capitalism: “It is the ‘vital expression’ of capitalism—as a military force used by the capitalist states in their external conflicts ... and as a weapon in the hands of the ruling classes for suppressing every kind of movement, economic and political, of the proletariat.”<sup>1</sup> American reality convincingly confirms this statement.

American imperialism lays an increasing stress on its role as an international policeman and on sabotage against the socialist system, trying to undermine its ideological and political influence. At the same time, the militarization of the economic and socio-political life of American society is used as the strongest weapon in the struggle against the democratic and labor movement within the USA. Militarization has become an inalienable part of the political course of the American government irrespective of which party is in power. The factor of militarization has become a stable and most important aspect of two-party politics. The only differences are in the size of further increases in military budgets. American science is increasingly subject to the influence of militarization, which makes it an important factor of the military-technological potential and a powerful instrument of American expansionism.

The militarization of the economy distorts and deforms the entire course of social production in the USA. By the end of the 1970s, more than 5 million, or 28 per cent, of those engaged in US manufacturing industries took part in producing armaments. The number of persons diverted from non-military production, including the servicemen in the armed forces, the National Guard and the personnel in various departments, is 9 million (or 11 per cent of all those employed in the country's economy).

Even the journal *Business Week*, an important organ of big business, wrote that the burden of military spending pushes inflation higher and will “doom any chance that Americans will get a tax break”.<sup>2</sup> “If not for the military money,” wrote Gus Hall, “thousands of authors, television newscasters, newspaper columnists, scientists and professors

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, “Bellicose Militarism and the Anti-Militarist Tactics of Social-Democracy”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1982, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *Business Week*, January 28, 1980, p. 72.

would be on welfare... The endless list of people who are 'beholden' to the military because they are on the 'take' includes labor leaders, comedians, small businessmen, and the clergy. Thus the militarization has become a 'system' affecting all places of society."<sup>1</sup>

The USA far outstrips all the other capitalist countries militarily. Special emphasis is placed by the ruling circles of that country on attaining military superiority over the USSR, which is clear from the measures taken by the Reagan administration. But the advocates of American capitalism are blinded by their illusions of "eternity" and "immutability" of US superiority in the world capitalist economy. After the end of World War II, US imperialism effectively used the temporary weakness of its rivals. The high rate of growth in the USA was attained at the expense of the economy of other leading capitalist countries. World War II stimulated the development of progressive technology, in which the USA surpassed the other countries. Besides, taking advantage of the weakness of war-devastated Western Europe, it literally plundered not only its enemies but also its allies. However, US economic dominance could not remain eternally immutable. The new stage in the general crisis of capitalism, connected with the development of the scientific and technological revolution, is characterised by the extremely strong impact of the law of uneven development of capitalist countries.

As Lenin pointed out, the capitalist system develops amid endless and acute struggle between "national (rather nationally isolated) imperialisms".<sup>2</sup> In our day, when the sphere of imperialist domination has considerably decreased, the inter-imperialist contradictions grow more intensely, the balance of forces within the imperialist camp changes more rapidly, "the centrifugal forces generated by bourgeois national interests are increasingly weakening the threads that hold the capitalist world together; US imperialism is losing its place on the pinnacle of the pyramid".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gus Hall, *Imperialism Today. An Evaluation of Major Issues and Events of Our Time*. International Publishers, New York, 1972, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Preface to N. Bukharin's Pamphlet, 'Imperialism and the World Economy'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Gus Hall, *Op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

While remaining the most powerful capitalist country—economically, scientifically, technically and militarily—the United States can no longer exploit the legend of its exceptional position in world development with the same success as before. The assertions concerning permanent growth rates of economic development and stability of reproduction have become patently untenable. The hopes that American capitalism would be able to avoid an aggravation of class antagonisms were not borne out either.

The weakening of US positions in the world capitalist economy is due to a number of domestic and international factors. Of special importance is the growing instability of social production, the inability to overcome the emerging tendency toward a decrease in the growth rate, and the fact that the USA is dropping behind other capitalist countries in the growth of labor productivity. American researchers call the economy of their country "slow", and compare the USA, from the economic standpoint, with a runner who has made a spurt but exhausted his stamina.

This regularly produces critical situations and serious disturbances in the functioning of the economic mechanism of the USA. The internationalization of capitalist production has brought about a more acute rivalry over the sources of raw materials and energy. New centers of the world capitalist economy have emerged.

The fierce struggle between the principal centers of capitalism—the USA, the EEC and Japan—on the international market takes place under conditions where, on the one hand, the changes in the balance of forces between the imperialist states have greatly accelerated, and, on the other, the economy of capitalism has entered a new phase of development essentially different from all the previous cycles both in the rate of growth and in the general conditions of reproduction. Capitalist economy must now adapt itself increasingly to the new conditions in the world economic relations, which are not at all favorable for the capitalist system of production.

The USA is the main source of economic upheavals in the entire capitalist world. The desire of the ruling circles of the USA to retain their hegemony, economic hegemony included, accelerates the development of economic crises, unemployment and monetary upheavals in the other capitalist countries as well.

In the USA itself, both quantitative and qualitative economic indices have deteriorated. The falling effectiveness of production complicates the solution of such vital problems as inflation and unemployment and weakens the international positions of American imperialism.

The weakening of the dominant position of American capitalism is clearly manifested in the growing underloading of production facilities. In relation to 1967, the load of the production capacity in the USA in 1972 was 84.2 per cent and in 1977, only 82.4 per cent.

In 1978, President Carter pointed out in his Economic Report that the rate of production did not correspond to the national economic tasks. And although some growth began in 1977, the enormous resources of the American economy were by no means fully utilized. In the 1960s, the average growth rate was 3.7 per cent, while in the 1970s it fell to 2.9 per cent<sup>1</sup>. As a result, the share of the USA in the total production of the capitalist world and in the production of the most important types of commodities continued to fall, as is clear from the data on the share of industrial production of the capitalist countries (per cent)<sup>2</sup>:

	1950	1960	1979
USA	48.7	41.9	37.3
France	5.9	6.6	6.1
FRG	6.3	10.6	8.5
UK	8.6	7.4	4.3
Japan	1.6	4.8	9.6

The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the developed capitalist countries noticeably moved closer to the corresponding index in the USA. Thus, in France it was 83.7 per cent in 1975 and 91.5 in 1978; in Japan, 68.5 and 87.4 respectively; in the FRG, 96.6 and 108.3, thus exceeding the US level in 1978.

Changes in the per capita GDP figures are a most important index of the levelling out of economic development. Changes in the structure of the GDP, the growth of the

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, April 1974, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodniye otnosheniya*, No. 8, 1980, p. 20.

share of industry in it, have the same significance. In 1977, that GDP index was 29 per cent for the USA, 30 for France and Great Britain, 32 for Japan, 35 for Italy, and 41 for the FRG.<sup>1</sup> US competitors in the world markets have also made considerable advances in the productivity of labor. In 1950, labor productivity in Great Britain was 59 per cent of that in the USA, and in 1977, 64 per cent; in France, 46 and 89 per cent respectively; in Federal Germany, 40 and 85; in Italy, 32 and 60, and in Japan, 16 and 64 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of the growth in labor productivity has become a key one for the US economy. The rate of growth of labor productivity in the USA in the last 20 years has been the lowest among the developed capitalist countries. The deterioration of the overall conditions of reproduction became especially apparent in the 1970s. In 1978, a national council on labor productivity was set up, intended to ascertain the basic causes of the declining growth rate of labor productivity and to work out measures for raising it.

The fight of the American imperialism to gain a dominant role in the world taxes all its forces to the utmost. The competition keeps crowding the USA in the world markets. In 1947, the share of the USA in the value of export in the capitalist countries was 33 per cent, and in 1980, only 13 per cent. This is reflected in the trade balance deficit which has become permanent. In 1971, for the first time since 1888, the US trade balance became negative. In 1971, the deficit amounted to \$2.3 billion, while in 1979 it reached \$39.6 billion. The military spending of the USA and its aid to reactionary regimes have played a significant role here. The growth of the US trade deficit in the 1970s was accompanied by a fall in the value of the dollar as international currency. The monetary-financial crisis brought into play a whole series of factors accelerating inflation, limiting the domestic demand and resulting in a recession and mass unemployment.

<sup>1</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1979*, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, 1979, p. 896.

<sup>2</sup> *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodniye otnosheniya*, No. 4, 1980, p. 59.

In his report to Congress, President Carter indicated "the imbalance in the international economic system", pointing out that the decisive factors here were the slowing down of the development of the US economy and the permanent deficit of the American trade.<sup>1</sup> The ruling circles of the USA try to improve their balance of payments. With the coming of President Reagan to power, the US government began to encourage the major banks of the country to raise the interest rates. That resulted in a considerable rise in the value of the dollar. The temporary improvement of the positions of the American currency was obviously achieved at the expense of US partners and was accompanied by a further disorganization of the entire capitalist system of international payments. In the final analysis, this policy aggravates the economic problems both in the USA and in the capitalist world as a whole.

A most important indication of the deepening crisis of American capitalism is the changed character of the causes of cyclic economic crises, which are influenced by both domestic and international factors. There were 6 economic crises in the USA between 1947 and 1975. As Victor Perlo, a prominent American economist, pointed out, all these partial crises are individual economic aspects of the deepening overall crisis of capitalism. They have become permanent and differ only in the intensity. Economic crises are becoming increasingly frequent and all-embracing, manifesting themselves in particularly harsh and destructive forms. No other country can boast the same frequent and acute interchange of periods of a more or less significant upsurge in production with cyclical, intermediate, partial structural crises, with periods of stagnation and depression.

During the 1969-1970 crisis, the GNP volume fell by \$3.5 billion, which far exceeded previous recessions. In 1974-1975, that decrease reached \$22.3 billion.

The major industrialists and financiers are in the first place responsible for the increasingly frequent economic crises. "Gigantic crashes," wrote Lenin, "have become pos-

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Report of the President Transmitted to the Congress January 1978 together with the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1978, pp. 20-21.

sible and inevitable, only because powerful *social* productive forces have become subordinated to a gang of rich men, whose only concern is to make profits."

The economic crisis of 1974-1975 that shook the entire capitalist economy, was the deepest crisis in the USA after the Great Depression of the 1930s. The cyclical crisis of overproduction merged with the credit, monetary-financial, energy and ecological crises. Industrial production during the crisis fell by 13 per cent. Nearly one-third of the country's industrial capacity was frozen. The economy failed to produce \$435 billion worth of commodities.<sup>2</sup> Employment in nearly all the non-agricultural branches of the economy fell. As a result, about one in ten American workers became unemployed. It was then that the trend toward the combination of inflation and mass unemployment established itself, becoming an inalienable feature of the modern American economy. The USA entered the age of inflation. Prices began to grow faster not only during the cyclical rises in production but also during the slumps.

Just as the energy crisis, the urban crisis directly affects the deepening of the social polarization. Characteristic of the major US cities is social and economic decline. City centers become economically backward, non-productive areas, where a considerable share of the able-bodied population is fully or partially unemployed. The growing acuteness of the contradictions between labor and capital is accompanied by a crisis of the state-monopoly labor policy. Neither the Republican nor the Democratic administrations have been able to offer an effective economic program. Their efforts have been directed toward paralyzing the struggle of the working class, depriving it of part of the fruits of concessions previously won from the monopolies.

The sociologist Daniel Bell, a well-known advocate of American capitalism, believes that the true crisis is linked not so much with the economic upheavals of the 1970s as with the unpreparedness of capitalist society, morally and politically, to match economic urgencies. Michael Harring-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Lessons of the Crisis", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> M. Harrington, *Decade of Decision. The Crisis of the American System*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1980, p. 81.



ton, the leader of the left Social-Democratic group, gave an even more critical evaluation: "On the eve of the 1980s, American capitalism is in the midst of a crisis that bewilders the conventional wisdom of both liberals and conservatives. The nation is, in a sense, in a period resembling the years between 1919 and 1933... Then it was the mass unemployment of the Great Depression that could not be understood or controlled; now it is simultaneous joblessness and inflation."<sup>1</sup>

After the 1974-1975 crisis, the US economy was in a state of prolonged depression and feeble animation. "The economic malaise," wrote an organ of the business circles, "has manifested itself in two exceedingly distressing symptoms: rampant inflation and stagnating productivity."<sup>2</sup>

As early as the spring of 1980, there were signs of the next, seventh post-WW II economic crisis in the USA. There was a tendency toward cuts in production and growth of unemployment, particularly in such areas as the automobile industry, steel production and housing. By mid-1980, sale of cars dropped by 40 per cent compared with the first half of 1979. The number of new housing projects going into operation declined by 50 per cent. By the end of the first 6 months of 1980, 43 blast furnaces out of 106 were put out, and production in the steel industry proved to be lower than during the 1974-1975 crisis. Production in some other branches of the economy also fell considerably. In 1980, the GNP fell by 0.3 per cent compared with 1979. Between January and June 1980, 1.3 million lost their jobs.<sup>3</sup>

The monopolies started a wide propaganda campaign demanding structural and technological renovation of the US economy, cuts in the taxation of corporations and a new growth in the intensification of labor. These demands by the monopolies found full support among the organs of state power. A joint Congressional Committee of Democrats and Republicans on economic problems spoke in favor of

<sup>1</sup> M. Harrington, "Social Retreat and Economic Stagnation", *Dissent*, New York, Spring 1979, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> *Fortune*, Chicago, October 8, 1979, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 3, 1981, pp. 90, 92.

aiding corporations in stimulating investment in the industries, in the first place steel and automobile.

These industries, particularly the car industry, are the barometer of US economic life. They create nearly a fifth of the national product, consuming 60 per cent of synthetic rubber produced in the country, 50 per cent of malleable cast iron, 33 per cent of zinc, 25 of steel, and 17 of aluminum. The car industry claims nearly 25 per cent of the gross output of machine-building. In 1955, 7.9 million cars were produced in the USA, while in 1980, less than 7 million. At the same time, the giant automobile corporations General Motors, Ford Motor and Chrysler occupy the leading positions among the transnational companies in the export of capital and in revenues obtained from their foreign-based branches.

The idea of "technoreindustrialization" has been put forward in the USA, i.e., of renovating the basic means of production through the introduction of the most recent achievements of science and technology. The "technological reindustrialization" pursues two principal goals: consolidation of the positions of American capital in the competitive struggle in the world markets and further growth in the exploitation of the working class. The monopolies started a fierce campaign to freeze the wages. All US governments of this period have supported them.

In August 1980, President Carter proposed a "new economic program" containing an appeal for further expansion of the policy of cooperation between labor and capital, for concluding a kind of "social contract" between the trade unions and the management of state-monopoly capitalism. It was suggested that the labor unions should moderate their economic demands and consent to state regulation of the wage growth. The president regarded the "aggressiveness" of the unions and not the growing profits of the monopolies or the rising military spending as the main cause of the inflation. The results of anti-crisis measures of the ruling circles of American state-monopoly capital indicate that mass unemployment and intense inflation cannot be overcome by consolidating the positions of big business.

The austerity policy pursued by the Reagan administration fully conforms to the program of monopolistic "reindustrialization". The administration has worked out and implements a consistent program of greater redistribution

of the national income in favor of big business and of cutting consumption, making drastic cuts in welfare spending and at the same time increasing military spending.

The state-monopoly policy aimed at stabilizing the American economy cannot go beyond the vicious circle of the incompatibility of the interests of the monopolies and of the popular masses. All of this leads to new complications in the social relations, destabilizing all spheres of the life of American society.

#### The Effect of the Expansion of Transnational Corporations on the Position of the Working Class

Despite the weakening of the positions of US state-monopoly capital in world capitalist production, it retains its status as the main center of the capitalist world's financial exploitation. American monopolies lay particular emphasis on the struggle for the spheres of capital investment. The growing US expansionism relies on active exploitation of its scientific and technological potential, superiority in the field of production organization, and sophisticated methods of exploiting manpower. The USA produces up to 40 per cent of the whole output of the capitalist world.

Transnational corporations (TNCs) play a special role in the foreign economic expansion of the United States. Their development is a consequence of the deepening inter-imperialist contradictions at the new stage of the scientific and technological progress. The headquarters of the majority of the most powerful transnationals are located in the USA. Of these, 12 have an annual turnover between \$10 billion and \$50 billion. In the mid-1970s, US corporations claimed 57 per cent of the turnover, 53 per cent of the assets, 52 per cent of the manpower and 68 per cent of the net profit of 50 international industrial giants of the capitalist world. American imperialism set up an economic empire beyond US borders that is more powerful than any of its principal competitors. In 1974, the products of US monopolies sold at foreign markets were worth \$536 billion, 80 per cent of the revenue coming from the enterprises abroad fully controlled by American capital, while only 20 per cent came from the US domestic

market. "The multinational firm, in moving production facilities and technology among countries—and thereby shifting the locus of production—is presumably seeking lower costs, higher sales, and higher profits than would be the case if production were carried out in the United States."<sup>1</sup>

This conclusion made by an American economist is confirmed by the data on the sharp rise in capital export. Thus, in the 1970s, US monopolies considerably increased their economic expansion abroad and their profits from the foreign investments (in millions of dollars)<sup>2</sup>:

	1970	1977
Direct investments of US corporations abroad, total	75,480	148,782
in the developed capitalist countries, total	51,819	108,047
in Europe	25,255	60,591
in the developing countries	19,192	33,706
Profits of US corporations from foreign investments, total	8,169	19,851
in the developed capitalist countries, total	4,577	11,889
in Europe	2,401	7,125
in the developing countries	2,941	7,756

As these data show, direct investments of US corporations in Europe are almost twice as great as similar investments in the developing countries, but it is from the latter that US monopolies get their enormous profits. The profits from the investments and entrepreneurial activity abroad constitute a considerable share of all the profits of the major US monopolies.

In 1950, the multinational US monopoly General Motors received the profit of \$834 million, while in 1977 the figure was \$2,893 million; for the General Electric the figures were \$173.4 million and \$1,409 million respectively; for the International Business Machines (IBM), \$64.7 million and \$3,011 million; for the Union Carbide, \$229.5 million and \$556 million. Developing production abroad, American corporations break down the barriers of protectionism and customs limita-

<sup>1</sup> *American Labor and the Multinational Corporation*, ed. by Duane Kujawa, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1973, p. XII.

<sup>2</sup> Computed from *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1978*, Washington, 1978, p. 865.



tions and, using the international division of labor and world trade in their interests, weaken their competitors.

In monetary terms, the sales of certain major American corporations exceed the GNP of a number of states. For example, in 1973, the total sum of the General Motors sales was \$36 billion, which is greater than the GNP of Belgium, Denmark and Greece; 27 thousand foreign branches of the American corporations practically extend their tentacles to all the areas of the world capitalist economy. The IBM has enterprises in 126 countries, Gulf Oil, in 61. In the early 1970s, as Barnet and Müller pointed out, 75 per cent of the assets of the American electrical industry monopolies, more than 50 per cent of the assets of the oil companies and about 40 per cent of the total assets of the consumer goods industry were located outside the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Moving labor-consuming industries to countries with cheap labor, these corporations gain a significant increase in the profits through more intense exploitation of local manpower. The conference of the International Metalworkers Federation held in the summer of 1978 in Detroit pointed out that the giant General Motors, Ford Motor and Chrysler corporations increased the production of cars in the Republic of South Africa, in the Philippines, Brazil and other areas where workers' wages were 5 to 8 times lower than in the USA. Chrysler produced 39.5 per cent of its cars abroad, Ford Motor, 37, and General Motors, 23 per cent. United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser said at the conference that 18.5 per cent of all cars sold in the US in 1977 were imports.<sup>2</sup> The mass transfer of capital and latest technology by the American monopolies beyond the borders of the USA sharply decreases the volume of capital investments within the country.

In 1971-1975, millions of Americans became redundant because of the outflow of capital and technology to countries with cheap labor. In 1976-1980, this policy resulted in the loss of another 2 million jobs in the USA. American corporations which get huge profits abroad started closing down works within the country on a mass scale. Thus, Firestone, the largest monopoly in the rubber industry, closed down 6 plants.

<sup>1</sup> R. J. Barnet, R. E. Müller, *Global Reach. The Power of the Multinational Corporations*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1974, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, June 1978, pp. 12, 14.

Steel companies also closed down several mills. In 1980, there were about 300,000 unemployed in US car industry, and yet General Motors closed down plants in Los Angeles, St. Louis and Pontiac. At the same time, that same company modernized 6 old and built 5 new factories in Spain, Great Britain, France, Belgium and West Germany. Ford Motor also closed a number of plants.

To justify their actions, the multinational corporations allege that it is impossible for them to hold their own in the competitive struggle with Japanese and European automobile companies. But General Motors planned to spend the huge sum of \$18 billion in the first 5 years of the 1980s to expand production at its plants abroad. The major US electrical engineering corporations in 1979 spent twice as much money on expanding production at their foreign subsidiaries as in the United States. Ford Motor announced to the workers of its Alabama plant that unless they accepted a 50 per cent wage cut, the plant would be closed. All this shows that US monopolies are ready to doom working people of America to the greatest privations and suffering in their race after maximal profits. That is the real value of the rhetoric on patriotism and the welfare of the nation by the apologists of capitalism.

The development of the TNCs contributes to the internationalization of the conflict between labor and capital. American capital tries to circumvent the social legislation of the other countries and to encroach on the workers' rights to collective bargaining and strikes. These transnationals assume the right to impose so-called productivity agreements on local unions. As distinct from the ordinary collective contracts, recording mostly various working conditions, the productivity agreements, camouflaged as measures on improving organization of production and encouragement of such improvement, are actually intended to step up the exploitation of the work force and increase labor productivity through cuts in the breaks within shifts, manpower reductions, etc.

The United Nations International Labour Office has published a survey of the activities abroad of 6 US-based transnationals—the Caterpillar Tractor Company, Ford Motor, John Deere, General Motors, International Harvester and Otis

Elevator.<sup>1</sup> It is clear from the survey that foreign enterprises play an ever growing role in the increasing sales and profits of these corporations. For example, 31 per cent of sales and 44 per cent of the net income of Ford Motor come from outside the USA; for General Motors, the figures are 28 per cent and 15 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

The authors of the work point out that in most of their enterprises abroad, located in Brazil, Venezuela, the Philippines and other countries, the multinationals refuse to deal with the local trade unions to conclude collective contracts with them regulating labor conditions and wages. The average number of hours worked per week at the foreign enterprises of the American multinationals is much greater than in the USA. Thus, it is 42.75 hours at the John Deer plants in France and 50.7 hours in Spain; at the Otis Elevator works in the United Kingdom the number of hours is between 45 and 50.<sup>3</sup> And, in addition, the local workers are paid lower rates.

The working people in the developing countries are barbarously exploited. At the same time, the wage rates of individual sections of highly skilled workers are fixed at a level higher than the national average—in order to split the working class. A resolution by a convention of the United Electrical Workers stated that American multinationals were a great threat to the US and international labor movement. Bent on superexploitation, they trampled upon democratic freedoms and were instrumental in the establishment of dictatorial regimes.

This role of the multinationals was even more clearly described by Douglas Fraser, UAW President, in his speech at the convention of the International Metalworkers Federation in May 1981: "We all know that the multinational corporations have seldom, if ever, exercised their immense power with any significant measure of social responsibility... We have been confronted with such massive concentrations of economic wealth as we face from multinationals who think of the world as their factory, of workers as their chattels, and of Governments as their foremen." The UAW leader referred

<sup>1</sup> *Social and Labor Practices of Some US-Based Multinationals in the Metal Trades*, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1977, pp. 169-70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

to several right-wing regimes—Thatcher's in England, Pinochet's in Chile, and Reagan's in the United States—as "partners of Big Business". This attack on working people has made international labor unity indispensable, Fraser concluded.<sup>1</sup>

### The Monopolies' Offensive and the Policy of Social Maneuvering

In the 1960s and 1970s, the traditional policy of class collaboration underwent certain changes, but monopoly capital did not at all give up its desire to consolidate its alliance with union bureaucracy aimed at preventing the radicalization of the principal organizations of the working class—the trade unions.

To attain these goals, the ideological brainwashing of the working people has become more sophisticated. Special emphasis is laid on the concepts falsifying the character of the development of private capitalist property and the creation of monopoly conglomerates. In the view of bourgeois ideologists, a high level of concentration and centralization of production and capital has resulted in a negation of the exploiting character of capitalist ownership, which is now alleged to be social and to be used in the people's interests. John Galbraith, a well-known American economist, asserted that the industrial firm has "power only to serve; in the last analysis the greatest corporation is but the humble servant of the consumer".<sup>2</sup> He believed that under the conditions of a modern industrial corporation, the unity of all the employees, from the manager down to the rank-and-file workers, increased. On another occasion he wrote that the industrial system unified and swallowed the class interests.

Bourgeois ideologists (just as the experts in the corporations' apparatus) specializing in industrial relations, try hard to implant in the consciousness of the workers the idea that at the present stage in the development of the productive forces the policy of collaboration of all those involved in the production process is not just desirable but simply necessary.

<sup>1</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, June 1981, pp. 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> J. K. Galbraith, *New Industrial State*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1967, pp. 217-18.

In explaining the objective changes in the industries, production, in the structure of the mass labor force of diverse skills and in production technology based on the scientific achievements of the universities, laboratories and special scientific institutions, they make subjectivist conclusions about profound social transformations on the capitalist basis. Particularly untenable are their assertions that in so-called "postindustrial" or "technetronic society" good relations between labor and capital must be based on mutual respect and ensuring the rights of the employers and workers.

These concepts are based on the sacred and "immutable" principles of private property, and on the mutual moral and civil responsibility of employers and workers to the whole nation. "It is essential," wrote the economist Albert Rees, "that the great mass of manual workers be committed to the preservation of this system [the socio-economic system of the USA] and that they should not, as in many other democracies, constantly be attempting to replace it with something radically different."<sup>1</sup>

The state serves as a mechanism for maintaining discipline and opposing the inevitable protests arising in society. In the view of bourgeois ideologists, these functions demand that the state should be strong and strict within reasonable limits to manage the "industrial order". People living in the society of "industrial order", wrote Professor Kerr, must implicitly obey the dictates of the state.

The views of the bourgeois scholars and their prescriptions reflect the continued degradation and servility of bourgeois science subordinated to the power of capital in the new conditions of production rapidly changing under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution, the growing strength and organization of the working class, and its growing antagonism toward the ruling financial-industrial oligarchy. Their concepts of the so-called "labor union monopoly" are particularly hypocritical.

Exaggerating the power of unions, monopoly capital demands that the state should take harsher, repressive measures against their aspirations to go beyond the framework of the policy of class collaboration. "Union monopoly" is arbitrarily

<sup>1</sup> A. Rees, *The Economics of Trade Unions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962, p. 195.

interpreted to cover the growing ability of organized labor to wage large-scale and persistent economic struggle and is alleged to be pernicious not only for the employers but in the first place for the workers themselves. Unions are declared to be "coercive organizations" forcing the workers' will and compelling them, against their will, to fight employers.

Monopolies and their ideologues insist that the labor unions disturb the competitive struggle in the labor market, and that under these conditions the wages are not the price of the commodity labor power but a monopoly price arbitrarily established by the unions disregarding the interests of the employer and society. These sharp attacks by bourgeois scholars and big business on labor unions, ascribing them goals completely alien to them, are in the first place explained by the activity of the rank-and-file members which has increased the unions' ability to fight the all-powerful monopolies. But unions have no "monopoly power", of course. In actual fact they cannot establish monopoly prices of labor power the way capitalists set monopoly prices of other commodities.

This possibility is ruled out by the private ownership of the means of production, capitalist production relations of domination and subordination, and the existence of a huge number of unemployed. "Capital," Marx wrote, "is concentrated social force, while the workman has only to dispose of his working force. The contract between capital and labour can therefore never be struck on equitable terms."<sup>1</sup>

The struggle against the growing demands of the working class and its opposition to increased exploitation became the main stimuli for further consolidation of the forces of monopoly capital and the pressure it puts on the legislative and executive branches. "We have a mathematically precise proof," wrote Marx, "why capitalists form a veritable free mason society vis-à-vis the whole working-class, while there is little love lost between them in competition among themselves."<sup>2</sup> "While the working class sets up its trade unions, political organizations, cooperatives, cultural and enlighten-

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx, "Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council. The Different Questions", in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, p. 198.

ment circles, etc.," Lenin emphasized, "the bourgeoisie does the same on a much greater scale. Thus various bourgeois class organizations are established... This power permeates the whole of financial-capitalist society imposing a specific imprint on our times."<sup>1</sup>

The last 2 decades have been marked not only by increased influence of monopoly associations on the labor and social policy of the American state but also by further mobilization of "private initiative" in working out extreme measures against militant unions. The monopolies incite anti-union attitudes in society and resort to openly violent methods, exploiting white chauvinism and anti-communism.

There are certain nuances in the views of leaders of business organizations on the role of the state. But on the whole, the traditional laissez-faire stance of American business organizations has undergone further changes. The National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce and other business associations have seen for themselves that government interference in the economy, far from undermining the foundations of guaranteed private enterprise, quite on the contrary—defends and strengthens them, helping them, among other things, to fight the demands of the unions. They push through decisions favorable to them either by using a powerful lobby or through numerous congressmen directly dependent on them. The NAM, the Chamber of Commerce, the Committee for Economic Development and other business associations, wrote Professor Domhoff, have become the most authoritative experts on the economic policy of the governments of both the Democratic and the Republican parties.<sup>2</sup>

An active role is played by the Business Council, which exerts a great influence on the country's financial policy. Many other committees and councils of businessmen rally round it,<sup>3</sup> directly affecting the government's policy and supplying officials for it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Preparatory Materials for the Book 'The State and the Revolution'", *Complete Works*, Vol. 33, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1962, pp. 335, 336 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> G. W. Domhoff, *The Powers That Be. Processes of Ruling-Class Domination in America*, Random House, New York, 1978, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 75.

In 1973, yet another association of industrialists and bankers was set up, the Business Round Table. It is mostly concerned with lobbying and exerting pressure on congressmen. Its leaders also have constant contacts with the President and members of the cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

The penetration of business into the socio-political and cultural spheres has become more varied, particularly in its influence on the election process and the forms and activity of the government. The political activity of business associations, Professor Epstein observed, is the most essential part of their social-class policy.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, business-sponsored political action committees became widespread both on the local and on the national level. In 1975, there were 608 such committees, while in the 1980 election campaign about a thousand committees of this kind participated endeavoring to elect conservative elements to Congress.<sup>3</sup>

The political activation of businessmen went hand in hand with a strengthening of their struggle against the trade unions in the economic sphere as well.

Early in the 1960s, the NAM demanded that collective contracts covering whole industries must be declared null and void. It also demanded the liquidation of the right to a closed shop and other forms of union solidarity in their relations with the employers intended to make the latter recognize the unions, and also a ban on the use of union funds for political purposes.

The NAM demanded that no employer should be permitted to conclude collective contracts with any organizations linked with Communist or other groups opposed to the system of free enterprise.

This fierce struggle of the NAM against labor unions reflected the growing complexity in the class relations in the USA.

*Inflation, Unions and Wage Policy*, a report published

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> E. M. Epstein, *The Corporation in American Politics*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969, pp. 5-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Employment and Labor-Relations Policy*, ed. by Ch. Bulmer, J. L. Carmichael, Jr., Lexington Books, D. C. Heath and Company, Lexington, Massachusetts, 1980, pp. 157-68.

by the Chamber of Commerce, noted that "continuing increases in wage rates will be a powerful force working for progressively higher prices of industrial products."<sup>1</sup> Noting the sharp growth in the monopoly pressure on Congress and the government of the USA, the labor union magazine *Solidarity* wrote that big businessmen actually formed a secret governing directorate. According to its initiators' design, it would support many ultrareactionary groups, providing them with unlimited financial backing and with the necessary façade of respectability, and directing their anti-union activity.

Vigil B. Day, Vice-President of the General Electric Company, stated the demands of the monopolies in a conversation with George P. Shultz, Secretary of Labor in the Nixon cabinet, insisting that the government should support the plan, worked out by the NAM, for replacing the National Labor Relations Board by a special court and compulsory arbitration, aimed at putting an end to strikes and bringing them under full control.<sup>2</sup> In the view of the monopolies, only wage freezes and a ban on big strikes could be a reliable instrument of combating inflation and suppressing the unions' "irresponsible policy".

A convention of the National Association of Manufacturers, representing more than 40,000 employers and their associations, took place in 1970 under the slogan "Union Power Threatens America". NAM President W. P. Gullander declared there that "there should be a deafening demand for Congressional action to curb such power".<sup>3</sup>

Big business set up advisory committees attached to the government to express the businessmen's view of the economic and socio-political problems. In reality, they are used to determine directly the domestic and foreign policy of the administration's organs.

Business associations were especially active in the 1970s in their struggle against the construction sites picketing bill and the labor law reform. They emasculated those bills through

<sup>1</sup> *Inflation, Unions and Wage Policy. Report of the Committee on Economic Policy*, Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Washington, 1960, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, May 26, 1969, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily World*, December 7, 1971, p. 5.

direct pressure on Congressmen, so that the unions, which fought for an extension of their right to organize, especially in the southwestern states, and for recognition of the immutability of the prerogative of collective bargaining, did not get anything from the administration, as the AFL-CIO organ wrote.<sup>1</sup>

The monopolies and their associations considerably succeeded in preventing an influx of workers in unions. During 20 years, the number of their members has actually remained unchanged, despite a considerable growth in employment. The monopolists realize that it is impossible to destroy powerful union associations, and they therefore seek cooperation with union bureaucracy. Simultaneously, insurmountable barriers are erected for unions in those industries and areas of the country where they have traditionally been weak. The NAM and the Chamber of Commerce have set up a national action committee for the advancement in all states of the so-called right-to-work laws which reject the unions' rights to represent all the workers in concluding collective agreements, and interfere with the establishment of new unions. In fact, the anti-union campaign has been elevated to the national level.

For example, in the construction industry workers in more than half the contracts have no collective agreements, and the situation in the coal industry is the same. Not only individual companies of mine-owners but their association as well fought against the labor union in the 1977-1978 miners' strike. The same association signed a new collective agreement with the union on behalf of the companies. The association of US transport companies fought hard to prevent striking workers from getting any social welfare payments.

Beginning with 1980, April 17 is marked as Big Business Day in the USA. The initiative came from the NAM and the Chamber of Commerce intent on attracting the attention of the whole of the American people to the activities of big business.

A special effort is made to oppose the unions in the Southern states, where many plants of the major monopolies are moved in search of cheap manpower. For instance, the General

<sup>1</sup> *The American Federationist*, November 1977, p. 3.

Motors corporation refused outright to permit the organization of unions at its plants in Louisiana, Georgia, and Mississippi. The corporation gave in only when the United Auto Workers threatened a national strike.

The corporations, stepping up the false propaganda about the alleged labor union monopoly, produce vast quantities of anti-union literature, including special instructions for the employers on how to get rid of unions. In 1976, NAM President R. Heath Larry stated that there was no need for union interference in the relations between employers and workers. In 1978, the NAM set up a council to combat the unions. At the NAM initiative, employers' organizations resort more and more often to the services of anti-union advisory firms.

According to a report by the National Labor Relations Board, there were about a thousand of anti-union consultants active in the USA in 1980. Employers spent \$500 million on their services. In 1981, in 656 votes out of 902 conducted by the National Labor Relations Board on the issue of organizing unions or their branches, the unions were defeated due to the efforts of such consultants.<sup>1</sup>

The weekly *AFL-CIO News* wrote of the mass revival by the monopolies of spying and detection in labor organizations. A wide network of detective agencies operate, their men camouflaged as "management consultants". One of such "consultants", Rocci Pettigrew, has deposed that a total surveillance over the rank-and-file activists is organized at West Coast enterprises. Private detective bureaus, closely cooperating with various government agencies, also try to prevent the growth of unions.<sup>2</sup>

The unions and the monopolies fought a pitched battle over the National Labor Relations Act. The unions sought more effective means against the anti-union practices of employers. The Chamber of Commerce tried to justify obstructing the setting up of unions, particularly in the Southern states, and the refusal to deal with them as lawful labor representatives, even if the majority of the employees should vote, under the auspices of the National Labor Relations Board, in favor of the given union.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, April 7, 1982, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *AFL-CIO News*, December 8, 1979, pp. 1, 8.

The monopolies were worried that Congress would pass the law on labor reform in the version favorable to the unions, as a result of which the union membership might rise in the coming years. That is what the monopolies are especially afraid of, for in that case the strength of the working class in the struggle for higher wages would grow considerably.

In 1979, business associations exerted pressure on the government and Congress to pass a law directly imposing limitations on wage rises.<sup>1</sup>

Big business placed especially great hopes on Ronald Reagan as he settled at the White House. In the 97th Congress, elected in 1980, large corporations' supporters held sway. So the situation was favorable to the monopolies.

Big business was inspired by the orientation toward "re-industrialization" of the American economy and the strengthening of its competitiveness through granting enormous financial privileges to the monopolies and limiting welfare spending.

The servility of the supreme legislature toward monopoly capital and direct bribing of the legislators became typical phenomena.

The 97th Congress, elected in 1980, was even closer linked with big business than the previous one. The animosity of most of its members toward the interests of the working people was clearly shown by its readiness to support all of President Reagan's programs aimed at bringing down the working people's living standards and granting new enormous privileges to the monopolies.

The monopolies' rising anti-union activity alarms those political leaders who are inclined toward the policy of compromises between labor and capital and to liberal methods of settling conflicts.

Regardless of which party is in office, regulating industrial relations is invariably viewed as a most important function of the state and as an inalienable part of the government's domestic policy.

The traditional differences between the Democrats and the Republicans in the methods of state regulating of the economy, as well as the specific features of the mass basis of these

<sup>1</sup> *UE News*, February 19, 1979, p. 3.



parties, still affect their methods and means of implementing labor policy. However, these differences are obliterated in the course of the evolution of this policy. A unified national labor policy is becoming ever clearer, and its orientation is permanently anti-labor, regardless of the change at the White House. Convincing evidence of this is the fact that all the US administrations of the 1960s and 1970s used economic, social and organizational means to increase the exploitation of the working class.

State-monopoly regulation goes beyond the interests of individual monopolies not only in its scale but also in its character. In many cases the government performs the function of servicing the entire process of reproduction, using toward this purpose its taxation and depreciation policies, regulating the terms of granting credits, etc. The socialization of economic activity in the USA is accompanied by a growth of the role of the state not only as a mechanism of coercion and suppression but also as an economic mechanism at the disposal of the ruling class. Under the conditions of accelerated scientific and technological progress and economic competition between the two social systems, direct state interference in the economy has become a necessary condition of the functioning of the modern capitalist mode of production. American state-monopoly capitalism more and more acts as a collective exploiter.

The widely ramified mechanism of government agencies, closely collaborating with monopoly capital, has become a significant force. Remaining a superstructure category, it deeply penetrated all the spheres of the economy and production relations. As economic instability grows, government regulation rises to a higher level marked by gradual centralization of economic management on a national scale.

In the second half of the 1970s, US government apparatus employed 15 million persons. The federal government owned property worth \$454.5 billion. Federal purchases were in excess of 20 per cent of the GNP, the major monopolies accounting for 70-75 per cent of these. The share of the government sector in creating the GNP is growing: in 1965 it was 9.8 per cent, and in 1976, 11.6 per cent.

The growing activity of the American state in the sphere of economy facilitates further concentration and centraliza-

tion of capital. The ramified system of government orders, mostly for military output, services and studies, and also government subsidies, credits, tax policy, aid monopolies in their competitive struggle on the international scene, are the most characteristic indications of the government's role. In 1980, federal spending accounted for 33 per cent of the GNP, or \$1,700 billion.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, the government's role in the social sphere also grew. Helping monopolies to step up the workers' exploitation and to increase profits, the government is intent on restricting and suppressing the labor struggle. The government's social policy serves the same goal of keeping the population's purchasing ability at a certain restricted level, securing the sales of the commodities produced in the country and stimulating economic growth. Government spending on the training and retraining of manpower and some other social needs serves the same objectives.

Between 1950 and 1965, the overall government social spending on the federal, states and local levels grew from 8.8 to 11.7 per cent of the GNP, and between 1965 and 1975, to 19.9 per cent. But beginning with the second half of the 1970s, and especially noticeably with the coming of Reagan to power, these expenditures began decreasing.<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to stress here that the growth of government spending is accompanied by growing taxes imposed on the working people. It is appropriate to recall that the lion's share of all the government spending is used to step up militarization. Government spending on social welfare in no way covers the working people's actual needs, a fact recognized by some representatives of the US administration.<sup>3</sup>

The recourse to economic measures is one of the directions of social maneuvering. Side by side with this, the tendency toward non-economic coercion of the working class keeps increasing.

Just as in the years of McCarthyism, there has been a sharp growth in anti-communism and pressure against the labor

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, September 1981, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1976*, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, 1976, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> R. Morris, *Social Policy of the American Welfare State. An Introduction to Policy Analysis*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1979, pp. 4-7.

movement. The criterion of labor unions' "democratic status", as defined by the US ruling circles, is their rejection of links with the Communist Party and even of support of its actions. Labor organizations are bound in law to obey certain restrictions in their socio-economic activity.

With the coming of Reagan to power, the emphasis grew sharply on further restrictions on liberal reforms, while the prerogatives of the repressive and detective bodies, the FBI, the CIA and others, were extended. The Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism became extremely active. Its chairman, Senator Jeremiah Denton, was a high-ranking army officer in the Vietnam war. Chief Counsel of the Subcommittee Joel Lisker is a former FBI agent. This subcommittee can accuse any public organization, labor unions included, of links with "international communist terrorism", declare it anti-democratic and lay criminal charges against it—all of which the Subcommittee has proceeded to do with great vigor.<sup>1</sup>

Especially characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s was the fact that big business and the government increasingly combined methods of direct pressure on the workers with various forms of using the union bureaucracy. That policy was intended to contain the progressive forces within the unions in order to ensure a more effective functioning of the capitalist economy and, besides, to bring about a split within the labor movement.

The US ruling circles have a powerful arsenal of means of combating the growing labor movement. In the 1970s, the state-monopoly mechanism widely used, along with direct pressure on the working class and its organizations, manipulation of public opinion in order to prevent the working masses from realizing their true position and the irreconcilability of the people's interests and the goals of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

#### Increased Coercion in the Government's Labor Policy

Through persistent struggle with capital in the 1960s, the working class won certain wage rises and better working conditions and social insurance. There were also some changes

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, October 1981, pp. 20-27.

in the balance of forces between organized labor and capital. Acute industrial conflicts were accompanied by large-scale strikes. The financial-industrial oligarchy, seeking to keep up normal functioning of the capitalist economy, took into account the fact that it had to deal with a much stronger opponent than before. Powerful labor unions defended the interests of most industrial workers employed by major corporations in the principal branches of the economy.

The monopolies had tangible proof of the consequences of growing working-class organization. The unions were capable of bargaining with employers on an industry-wide scale. In this connection, big business waged a noisy propaganda campaign around the thesis that the unions were all-powerful.

President Kennedy spared no effort in working out new policies for social maneuvering, which grew in scope especially under Lyndon Johnson. Various committees and councils were set up comprising representatives of employers, labor unions and "the public". The government expected to use them to change the entire structure of the labor relations in the USA, so that industrial conflicts might be resolved without strikes and lockouts. The conciliatory leadership of the AFL-CIO actively collaborated with the governments of Kennedy and Johnson in working out and implementing the new strategy. Under the pretext of keeping invariable the share of wages and profits in the national income, "targets" were fixed which regulated the changes in the average annual level of the nominal hourly wages.

The government declared a wage rise of not more than 3.2 per cent a year to be the optimal norm. The policy of "targets" was patently anti-union and anti-strike; it was aimed in the first place against the mass industrial unions. The government tried to undermine their value as leaders of the workers' economic struggle. The membership of the arbitration committees and the federal mediation service was extended. But the "targets" policy did not justify the hopes placed on it. Despite the conciliatory line taken by the union's bureaucracy, the labor movement actively opposed the government's economic policy.

The unions demanded a shorter work week, and abolition of the anti-labor laws and limitations on wage rises; to this, President Johnson opposed a much-touted "war on poverty"



program followed by a program for a "great society" in the USA. The latter program contained demagogic promises of "affluence for all", and elimination of poverty and racial injustice. The Johnson program was permeated with the notorious ideas of American "exceptionalism" and the USA's alleged ability to uphold capitalism in its historical confrontation with socialism.

The "great society" program was one of the components of the US government's economic policy. Particularly characteristic of the Johnson administration was growing government intervention in the sphere of consumption and distribution relations. That policy reflected the aspirations of those strata in the ruling US circles which prefer the dampening of class struggles through extending social maneuvering.

The objectives of that policy were expounded in detail in the 1964 annual report of the Presidential Council of Economic Advisers. It emphasized the role of the state in more productive use of manpower, particularly through a considerable increase in its skills, so that it should be better able to meet the demands of the scientific and technological progress. The need was indicated for an effective solution of problems engendered by the growth of large cities, for stimulating technological progress and the development of what was referred to as depression areas. Closely bound up with these issues were the questions of stimulating and functioning of the economy as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

All these programs, both adopted and merely outlined, entailed the creation of a whole system of special offices at various levels, from federal to municipal. The main organ of that system was the Office of Economic Opportunity. It was assumed that it would have the right to interfere in the activities not only of local agencies but also those of the Federal Departments of Labor, Agriculture, and Health, Education and Welfare, as ones in charge of training personnel and aiding the needy (the aged, the disabled, the farmers, and the unemployed).

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Report of the President Transmitted to the Congress January 1965 together with the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1965, pp. 23-182.

The complex bureaucratic system was designed as a chain of institutions permeating the whole fabric of American society. The government strove to obtain the most detailed information on the mode of thinking among the low-income groups of the population in order to control their attitudes and behavior, distract them from the class struggle and publicize in every possible way the measures of the government and the President.

In his January 1966 message to Congress on the country's economic situation Johnson paid great attention to the relations between big business and the labor unions. He advocated "national unity". In the same message, the President proposed a legal ban on strikes in transport, in communications and communal services. He proposed a bill on compulsory arbitration of labor conflicts, aimed at containing the strike struggle. Johnson set up a special committee to work out new bills intended to consolidate the collaboration between industrialists and labor unions under the government's aegis.

The "radical measures" to end poverty and consolidate the nation's unity announced by the government ultimately led to a certain increase in the funds for poor family, unemployment and disability relief, higher retirement benefits and improvements in the medical services for the aged. In accordance with the law on combating poverty, \$340 million were allotted in the 1965 fiscal year and \$1.8 billion in 1966. Congress also approved the spending of \$1.75 billion in the 1967 fiscal year. However, the actual sums spent proved to be much lower than originally planned. At the same time, President Johnson proposed a military budget for the year 1966/1967 of \$112.8 billion. Thus, while proclaiming the doctrine of "great society", Johnson proposed in reality a budget of a militarized society.

"Labor corps", organized in accordance with the program of combating poverty, were aimed to bring up American young people in the spirit of militarism and hatred of communism. By the middle of 1966, they numbered about 60,000 young people who were housed, fed and paid small grants. The entire life of the future workers was strictly controlled by the management. The discipline in these corps was very much in the army style.

1966 was a watershed year in the government's economic policy because of the escalation of American imperialism's aggression in Vietnam. US direct military spending in 1966 rose by 20 per cent over the previous year. The swelling military spending and growing deficit of the federal budget served as a pretext for the government's revision of the entire structure of federal incomes and expenditures and cuts in welfare spending.

In November, the President authorized cuts of \$5.3 billion in federal spending in that fiscal year, using the fight against inflation as a pretext. The budgets of the Departments of Health, Education and Welfare, of Transportation and Agriculture were reduced. At the President's initiative, the planned reduction of the income tax of \$1.5 billion was suspended. At the same time, the cost of living rose in 1966 alone by 5.5 per cent, rent by 9 per cent, and the cost of medical services by 12 per cent. The unions, which had supported President Johnson's program of "war on poverty" and "great society" expressed grave dissatisfaction with his actions, particularly with his opposition to creating new jobs in accordance with the program of public works and reduction of the workweek to 35 hours.

Though persisting in its support of the Vietnam war waged by the US ruling circles, the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO was compelled to announce that it could not agree to the government's restrictions on wage rises, since they did not take into account the rise in prices. Countering the discontent among the unions, Johnson said on September 5, 1966 in Detroit: "For labor, self-restraint means keeping its wage demands within reason, and its productivity at a maximum. Only in this way can we extend our records of stability in unit labor costs."<sup>1</sup>

His appeals, however, did not meet with support in the unions. Fully aware that continued war in Vietnam would entail further deepening and aggravation of the contradictions between himself and those who had supported him at the 1964 election, Johnson tried to neutralize that trend. He managed to push through Congress a law on partial payment by the government of medical care for people over 65.

<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*, September 6, 1966, p. 46 m.

In 1966, the 89th Congress passed the bill on aid for the school education of persons living in depression areas, and the law on raising the minimal hourly wages to \$1.4 beginning February 1965 and to \$1.6 beginning February 1968. However, just as before, the hourly minimum wages stipulated by the law lagged behind the actual average hourly wages in the basic industries.

The "great society" program was intended for 40 to 50 years. But the economic policy on which it was supposed to be founded collapsed after less than 2 years. The last years of Johnson's presidency were marked by a growth of anti-union attitudes. Republicans, along with racist Democrats who were in the majority in Congress, resolutely insisted on new anti-labor laws. Avowed enemies of the unions appealed for a ban on industry-wide collective bargaining and for an introduction of compulsory government arbitration in particularly acute conflicts between corporations and labor unions.

President Johnson resorted more and more often to coercive measures against the unions, invoking the Taft-Hartley Act. In September 1966, he broke the strike at the General Electric on the grounds that the corporation was fulfilling military orders. The strike could not be permitted, said Johnson, because "our guys in Vietnam" needed arms—they needed them now and would need them in the future.

In April 1967, Johnson again invoked the Taft-Hartley Act to wreck a strike by the workers of the aviation plant in Stratford, Connecticut. The same law was used to break a strike at the metallurgical plant in Kokomo, Indiana, and, in September 1968, of the East Coast longshoremen. By the time of the 1968 presidential election, discontent and criticisms were loudly voiced throughout the USA against the authors of the "great society" program. The illusions engendered by Johnson's promises in the social field gradually evaporated.

"The Government," wrote Michael Harrington, "says that it will conduct an unconditional war on poverty and three years later announces that life in the slums has become worse... This contradiction between bold words and sordid deeds does not, however, stop at the water's edge... Before the escalation of the tragic war in Vietnam signalled the retreat from all his domestic social promises, Lyndon Johnson's rhetoric soared... Money, political and Federal talent were

mobilized to destroy the Viet Cong rather than the slums."<sup>1</sup> The stubbornly implemented policy of imperialist aggression and war became in the late 1960s the catalyst of all the phenomena in the areas of politics, economy, culture, social relations, finance and ideology.

Side by side with all this, discontent with the Johnson administration was also brewing on the right.

The socio-political development of the USA in the late 1960s resulted in a growth of groups of population hostile to labor unions, the administration's social programs for combating poverty, etc. The main domestic slogan which was used by Richard Nixon and George Wallace to attract the masses of voters, particularly from the middle strata, was that of "law and order". The popularity of that slogan, so obviously aimed against the Black population, reflected a sharp aggravation in the inter-racial relations in the last years.

It should also be borne in mind, however, that the growth of reactionary attitudes and actions is, to a considerable degree, a response to the left and democratic movement developing in recent years.

The Republicans' victory at the 1968 presidential election indicated that the voters no longer believed in the Democrats' ability to cope with complex domestic and foreign problems. But the Republicans' policy would inevitably lead to a new aggravation of contradictions between labor and capital, and fresh difficulties in the sphere of economic and socio-political relations. The Republican administration endeavored to consolidate the victory of conservatism. However, it also had to take into account the opposing ideological and political forces of the liberal trend advocating an extension of the policy of "class collaboration".

A most important problem strongly affecting the entire domestic political situation in the USA was the difficulties in the American economy, the growth of disproportions in its structure and functioning, unemployment and creeping inflation. The Black problem, growing more and more acute, the problems of the young people, the rise in crime and a complex of issues known as the urban problem remained among the malignant social problems.

<sup>1</sup> M. Harrington, *Toward a Democratic Left. A Radical Program for a New Majority*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1968, pp. 3-5, 270.

Mass anti-war movement assumed a special importance in the USA: it played the role of a political catalyst in arousing Americans to mass political activity. Another feature of the political life in the USA was the activization of the right wing, whose mass basis grew. Then there were the crisis in the ruling circles, the credibility gap, the difficulties experienced by the two-party system, and the growing conflict between the legislative and executive branches.

Under those conditions, the Republican administration endeavored to develop and improve the system of links and cooperation with the labor union leadership. With George Meany's consent, Richard Nixon appointed W.J. Usery Under Secretary of Labor. The AFL-CIO sent Nixon a message proposing cooperation in the labor relations. A number of conferences were held between the AFL-CIO leadership and Nixon, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, Secretary of State William Rogers and Secretary of Labor George Shultz. *U.S. News & World Report* wrote at the time that "relations between the AFL-CIO and Nixon officials have been friendly".<sup>1</sup> The union bureaucracy had hopes that an alliance with the government might help it to scotch the movement of union rank-and-file members that began at that time.

At first Nixon did indeed try not to aggravate the relations with the union leadership. He resorted to all sorts of maneuvers in attempting to contain the growth of the unions' economic struggle. At the same time, he was very cautious about revising the measures in federal welfare spending legislatively endorsed and practically implemented during the previous 8 years. However, as the economic and financial difficulties and inflation grew, the administration increasingly turned to offensive against the working class.

On moving to the White House, Nixon declared that his government would try to shift the greater part of the responsibility for welfare measures from the federal authorities to the local ones, which would involve the business circles in social reform on a large scale.

<sup>1</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, April 21, 1969, pp. 82-83.

Certain efforts were made to cure some of the sick society's sores, in particular hunger and poverty. However, the Republican administration's practical measures were completely inadequate to the scale and acuteness of the US social problems. President Nixon criticized sharply Johnson's discredited "great society" program. In December 1970, he stated: "I believe that we will build a new prosperity that will last ... a steady prosperity that people can count on and plan for."<sup>1</sup> In real terms, however, Nixon's tax reforms offered the greatest privileges to big business. The tax on corporation profits was reduced from 48 to 46 per cent.

Instead of concrete measures to fight unemployment, the President proposed that Congress should extend the term of unemployment benefits by 13 weeks, but not in all the states—only in those where the unemployment was higher than 4.5 per cent of the work force. The government announced new measures for expanding vocational training for young people. Simultaneously, the administration promised to aid the long-term jobs program worked out in 1968 and envisaging jobs for the sections of population most of all affected by unemployment (mostly Blacks and members of ethnic minorities). This program was undertaken in 131 US cities by the National Alliance of Businessmen.<sup>2</sup>

23,500 employers were signed up for it. 378,000 persons received training and got jobs by 1970, 75 per cent of them Blacks, and 19 per cent members of ethnic minorities. About 200,000 were still in their jobs in 1970.<sup>3</sup> But that was merely one-fifteenth of the total number of the unemployed. None of this had any bearing on the millions of employed workers who also needed retraining and school-leavers without any training.

Education programs put forward by the Republican government were just as inadequate. The participation of federal authorities in financing primary and secondary education remained minimal, amounting to approximately one-thirteenth of the state and municipal spending. The

<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*, December 5, 1970, p. c18.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, March 30, 1970, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

program of aiding families living in poverty was extended to cover 22.4 million Americans, an increase on the previous figure of 10.1 million. The Nixon government thus admitted that the number of the poor had grown.

President Nixon proposed to increase the minimal guaranteed income of poor families, which, as *U.S. News & World Report* admitted, was 7 times lower than the official minimum for a family of four. Added spending on education and health services was also very scanty. In a speech before a Congressional committee, UAW President Leonard Woodcock said: "Americans are also paying that \$70 billion for a system which permits the United States to rank 13th in death rates from pneumonia, 14th for diabetes-caused deaths... The sad fact is that the health of Americans in relation to the health of others in the world is deteriorating."<sup>1</sup>

Nixon objected to the growth of federal spending on welfare. In his view, most of the expenditures on social welfare should be footed by big business, but he got a prompt and clear reply: business is business, not a welfare agency, and it cannot solve tasks with which the government and the entire society must be concerned.

Nixon's economic policy included the traditional methods of budgetary regulation of finance and tax manipulation. The government endeavored, in the first place, to weaken the positions of unions in collective bargaining. The nebulous talk of bourgeois propagandists about the new administration's "realistic approach" to the complex domestic and foreign problems it inherited from the Johnson administration was dispelled as soon as the Nixon administration proceeded from generous promises to concrete acts.

In May 1970, the AFL-CIO leaders, in the presence of President Nixon who came to explain the reasons for an intervention in Cambodia, supported the escalation of war in Indochina, but criticized sharply the government's social policy. "The Administration's campaign against inflation has been a complete failure," declared the AFL-CIO leaders, pointing out that the unemployed were "victims of the Administration's deliberate policy to slow production and employment."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, July 1971, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *The American Federationist*, June 1970, p. 16.

The NAM, the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations, in their turn, persistently fought for new anti-union legislation and the replacement of the National Labor Relations Board by a special compulsory arbitration court in order to suppress strikes and increase their control over the activities of the unions. Harold C. Lumb, Chairman of the NAM Industrial Relations Committee, made a demagogic statement at an employers' conference, declaring the readiness of business to achieve an understanding with the unions through concluding collective agreements, and at the same time threatened the workers with compulsory arbitration and transfer of some plants to other countries.

The number of reactionary bills proposed in Congress swelled. The most menacing were the bills on banning industry-wide collective contracts, on limiting strikes to 30 days, on extending the anti-trust legislation to labor unions, on banning union political activity, and on compulsory arbitration of industrial conflicts. Members of the Nixon administration took an active part in working out new anti-labor laws. In particular, the Attorney General proposed an anti-conspiracy bill which could be used as a basis for criminal proceedings against union leaders opposing the government's domestic and foreign policy. The Nixon administration increased pressure against the unions through courts and the National Labor Relations Board. It was this kind of pressure that was brought to bear on the East Coast Longshoremen's Union, for instance, when it called a strike in early 1969.

In October and November of 1969 and in April and May of 1971, police and army units were used to disperse anti-war demonstrations and marches. Youth organisations such as the Du Bois Clubs, the National Student Association and the National Mobilization Committee to End War in Vietnam—were also persecuted. In Boston, a trial was held of Dr. Benjamin Spock and his supporters in the anti-war movement.

At the same time, Nixon continued to maneuver. He sought agreements with the AFL-CIO leadership. In 1970, the National Committee on Labor Productivity was set up comprising, along with government officials, representatives of big business and the top union leadership headed by George

Meany. Local branches of this committee (labor productivity councils) were set up at individual enterprises. Its goal was to consolidate the collaboration between employers and labor unions under the aegis of the government for mobilizing workers to more productive work and strengthening the positions of American capital on international markets. In 1971, a national committee on ensuring peace in the industries was set up, consisting of representatives of the monopolies and major unions.

The participation of a number of union leaders in the numerous government-sponsored committees was intended to create the impression that the administration endeavored to check the monopolies' offensive against the working people's economic interests. But these illusions were soon dispelled. Labor Secretary James Hodgson gave a warning in his speech in Congress on July 28, 1971 that the President, worried by a rise in strike movement, intended to propose emergency legislation. Indeed, soon Nixon proposed a revision of certain aspects of the Taft-Hartley Act, making its anti-labor orientation more pronounced and extending the government's authority in breaking strikes. At the same time, he introduced into Congress a bill entitled Emergency Public Interest Protection Act envisaging an extension of the government's power to stop strikes in railway, sea and air transport.<sup>1</sup>

The most open expression of the Nixon government's pro-monopoly position was his "new economic policy". The government stated its three goals: reduction of unemployment, an end to inflation, and higher US competitiveness in the world markets. In actual fact it was a policy of increasing the profits at the expense of wages. To fight the "overheating of the economy", credits on production expansion were restricted, and state orders reduced. But these measures merely contributed to economic recession.

On August 15, 1971, Nixon gave orders to freeze wages and prices for 90 days and to ban strikes for higher wages. It was pointed out at the November 1971 AFL-CIO Convention that during the freeze period only (between August 15 and November 14, 1971) the working class had lost a total

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, February 4, 1971, p. 3.

of \$4 billion. The reason for the losses was the government's ban on bonuses the employers were to pay under earlier concluded collective agreements.<sup>1</sup>

The "new economic policy" was the result of an aggravation of the crisis of American imperialism and its increased efforts to preserve the economic and political hegemony of the USA in the capitalist world. Gus Hall wrote that the administration's measures were intended to bind the American working class hand and foot in its struggle against exploitation. That policy provided a new context for the class struggle in the USA. President Nixon's "emergency measures" meant that government interference in the relations between labor and capital became harsher.

The policy of the union top leaders to reach an agreement with Nixon was favorable to the government's anti-labor plans. As early as 1970, the AFL-CIO published a statement to the effect that it was ready to replace strikes by arbitration. AFL-CIO president George Meany believed that strikes became meaningless where the positions of both the industrialists and the unions were firm.

Taking the decision to freeze wages and prices, the Nixon administration expected these measures to undermine the strength of organized labor movement compelling the employers to make certain concessions, and to help overcome the obstacles in the way of increasing exploitation of workers. Big business approved the wage freeze measures.

To implement the moves proposed by President Nixon, special agencies were set up under direct government control. The most important of these were the Cost of Living Council and the Pay Board. A member of the latter, Vice-President of the General Electric Virgil B. Day, stated: "We are working in an atmosphere of realism, and we are trying to function as a unit."<sup>2</sup> The creation of these agencies did not signify control over the growth of profits. On the contrary, the government did its best to increase them. It warned the employers that if they raised wages "illegally", they would be deprived of government contracts and fined \$5,000. Thus, the achievements of the unions, hard-won in the battles of the past years, were annulled.

<sup>1</sup> *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, December 1971, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, February 7, 1972, p. 46.

In July 1971, the Steelworkers' Union concluded a new collective agreement with the steel companies envisaging higher wages, but the increase was canceled at the government's orders. At Westinghouse Electric plants, tables listing the new, increased wage rates to be paid as of August 17, 1971 were circulated, but the company, invoking Nixon's instruction, kept to the previous wage levels. These were now more often determined in the halls of Congress and the Pentagon than in the course of negotiations between unions and employers or under strike pressure.

Measures on wage freezing and introduction of government control over wage increases, just as the whole of the policy of restricting the constitutional rights of the working class, stimulated the growth of activity among rank-and-file union members aimed against the administration's measures and union leaders' conciliating attitudes. Many union leaders, aware of the growing discontent among the rank and file, opposed Nixon's policy. A special statement by one of the largest US labor unions, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, read: "The President is engaging in strike breaking on an unprecedented scale... In effect, the nation's chief executive has become the nation's chief strikebreaker."<sup>1</sup>

Leonard Woodcock stated that the government wanted a war with unions. In reply, President Nixon observed that the policy of wage and price restraints would continue until inflation was controlled, that is to say, for an indefinite time.

Nixon's "new economic policy" went through 4 phases and was implemented during the period between August 1971 and April 1974. After a 90-day freeze, wages could rise but not more than by 5.5 per cent a year and on condition that labor productivity rose by 3 per cent a year and prices, by 2.5 to 3 per cent. However, as the chairman of the Presidential Council of Economic Advisers warned, those wage levels would not be reached—which was what actually happened. Evidence is found

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, August 24, 1971, p. 11.



in the data on the average annual gains in nominal wages (per cent)<sup>1</sup>:

	1970	1973
Manufacturing industries	6.0	4.9
Non-manufacturing industries	10.2	5.5
Construction	14.9	5.2

Thus, the rise in the nominal wages in all the branches of the economy slowed down sharply, which undoubtedly contributed to a growth in corporation profits.

AFL-CIO neutrality during the 1972 presidential election was to Nixon's advantage, and he decided to express his gratitude to the union bureaucracy for its "understanding" of the "national interests". He appointed Peter Brennan, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of New York, Secretary of Labor. George Meany approved of that appointment, although Brennan's nomination was criticized by the rank-and-file members of the union.

After Nixon's resignation and Gerald Ford's accession to power, the government's policy with regard to the working class remained essentially unchanged. During Ford's stay at the White House, an acute economic crisis broke out, which aggravated the class contradictions. "President Ford," wrote a union journal, "called on Congress to adopt a series of measures which can only make the situation even worse."<sup>2</sup> In 1975 and 1976, the number of persons below the poverty line rose by 2.5 million. Unemployment reached 8.2 per cent, and the annual price rise was 12 per cent. Nevertheless, Ford repeatedly vetoed bills envisaging welfare spending. Even Meany was compelled to urge him to get close to "the real problems of America and spend time in unemployment centers, not with bankers and stockbrokers".<sup>3</sup>

Jimmy Carter's victory during the 1976 presidential election is largely explained by the voters' dissatisfaction with the new economic difficulties, the deepening social injustice and the growth of political corruption during the Republican administration. Carter used the slogans of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and the ideas of populism. He called

<sup>1</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1974, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *UE News*, January 27, 1975, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily World*, February 20, 1975, p. 4.

himself "a friend of the unions", but was in actual fact the same kind of defender of the interests of monopoly capital as the discredited Nixon, who had never hidden his sympathies for big business.

Carter started a loud demagogic campaign for human rights throughout the world, but his attitude to the real and vital rights of the working people in the USA itself reeked of falsehood and hypocrisy. UAW secretary-treasurer Emil Mazey stated that it was meaningless to win elections if, instead of social change, the status quo was preserved; there was no happiness that way. And James Roti Roti, Vice-President of UAW Local 930, declared: "We know the President was elected by big business."<sup>1</sup> Violating their pre-election promises, Carter and his advisers launched unchecked militarization, under the cover of the "Soviet threat" which they themselves invented, and an offensive against the working people's economic and social interests.

Criticizing his predecessors, President Carter stated that any economic system declared itself bankrupt if it justified the existence of unemployment and maintained it. In 1976, trying to get the workers' votes, he said that the country's most important priority must be providing jobs for all who wanted to work, that everyone had a right to a decent job, and to attain that goal he was going to propose a positive program. However, the basic lines of the administration's economic and social policy remained unchanged.

In January 1977, President Carter proposed a program for stabilizing the economy. The *AFL-CIO News* wrote: "We believe the two-year package is too small, takes too long and is too ill-advised to give the economy the stimulus it needs."<sup>2</sup> Camouflaging the essence of his anti-labor policy, Carter called for "mutual sacrifices" in the name of fighting inflation and strengthening the competitiveness of the American economy, just as Nixon had. But the 4 years of Carter's presidency showed that the sacrifices were all on the side of the working class, while the other side, monopoly capital, increased its profits considerably.

<sup>1</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, June 3, 1977, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *AFL-CIO News*, January 15, 1977, p. 4.

Carter had promised to fight price rises, but they rocketed from year to year. During 1978, the cost of living in the USA grew by 10 per cent, and during 1979 by 13.4 per cent. In the first quarter of 1980, the prices of consumer goods rose by 19 per cent. Food prices rose by 20 per cent, the price of communal services by 38.7 per cent, and of petroleum by 52.8 per cent. The President called on the unions to restrict themselves, in the name of fighting inflation, to wage increases of not more than 7 per cent a year, which covered only a third of the rise in the cost of living.

To supervise the "voluntary" wage restrictions, Carter set up the Council on Wage and Price Stability. The government launched an offensive against the unions at a time when prices kept growing while real wages continued to fall. According to a US Department of Labor report, real wages of the average working-class family declined by 6.9 per cent in 1979 alone. As for corporations' profits, they grew on an unprecedented scale—to \$151 billion in 1979, a threefold advance from \$55 billion in 1974.<sup>1</sup>

Carter's other promises—about fighting inflation, reducing taxes on low-income families, introducing a national system of health service—also remained unfulfilled.

In 1979 and 1980, the rate of growth of unemployment increased again. In early 1980, the President admitted that the government could not provide the young people with "any meaningful number of jobs".<sup>2</sup> The Humphrey-Hawkins Act, passed in 1979 and envisaging a reduction in the national unemployment level by the beginning of 1981 to 4 per cent, remained unimplemented.

Despite his promises, Carter did not support the demands of the unions about effective legislation against the monopoly policy of preventing unionization of millions of white- and blue-collar workers, particularly in the Southern states, where the unions are still weak. Moreover, the government fully supported the employers' organizations' furious campaign against a reform of labor legislation. Thus, President of the Chamber of Commerce Leshner urged the Senate to "defeat this horrendous union power grab".<sup>3</sup> Protecting the monopolies,

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, April 1980, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *World Magazine*, March 22, 1980, p. M-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Fortune*, March 27, 1978, p. 58.

the President failed to support the bill on effective measures against employers dismissing union activists and rejecting collective bargaining with the unions.

Evaluating the entire complex of the President's anti-labor measures, UAW President Douglas Fraser characterized the Carter program as an offensive against the working class, as a "one-sided class war". A United Electrical Workers official, Ed Bloch, called the Carter program a "born again" version of the Nixon-Ford wage-price control program of 1971-74.<sup>1</sup>

The unions were also extremely disgruntled at the fact that Carter did not fulfil his promise of a tax reform favoring low-income groups. *UE News* wrote that 52.5 cents of each tax dollar was spent on "past and future wars". "Social Security doesn't cost the government a cent. It doesn't cost the employers a cent since their part of the tax comes out of their employees' work."<sup>2</sup> In his 1980 budget, Carter proposed to cut welfare spending by \$28 billion and jack up military spending to \$145 billion.<sup>3</sup>

To dampen the workers' dissatisfaction with the government's policy, Carter, under pressure from the unions, pushed a bill through Congress on a current rise in the minimum wages to \$2.3 per hour. However, even on condition of full annual employment, that minimum covered only half the expenditures envisaged by the lowest budget of a working family. The working class was increasingly made to bear the burden of welfare spending. Thus, the draft budget for 1981 envisaged another rise in social insurance taxation by \$11 billion.

Government measures in the sphere of the economy were inadequate to cope with rampant inflation, the balance of payments deficit that had grown to menacing proportions, and the falling dollar.

At first, AFL-CIO leaders disagreed with the President's policy. "The AFL-CIO," stated George Meany, "is not an agency of government. It cannot be used to hold down wages or control workers." He called Carter the most difficult President he had ever had to deal with. "Even Nixon gave us an-

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, November 1978, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *UE News*, February 19, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Political Affairs*, April 1980, p. 4.



swers," he said. "We can't get them from this guy."<sup>1</sup> But then the leadership of the Federation made a smart turnabout. In September 1979, it came out in support of the decision of the Carter administration on a "voluntary" 7 per cent restriction on wage increases.

Lane Kirkland, Meany's successor as AFL-CIO President, went even further along the path of "class collaboration" and betrayal of the interests of the working class. He fully supported all of Carter's steps in limiting the relations with the Soviet Union and increasing international tension. Union bureaucracy was ready to sacrifice the working class's vital interests. It endeavored to stem the existing trend toward revising the traditional dogmas of "businesslike unionism" and combining economic struggle with vigorous social and political activities of labor organizations. This led to serious friction between union bureaucracy and the rank-and-file membership.

In the view of most adherents of the Democratic Party, Carter was the most conservative Democratic President in many decades. However, even as they expressed sharp discontent with Carter's actions, the labor unions, following their traditional tactics of choosing "the lesser evil", waged an active campaign in his favor and against Reagan, the Republican candidate. His program, if he were to be elected, wrote the press, would return America to its worst times, for it was aimed against the country's economic and social progress.

The working masses could see already from Reagan's statements during his first presidential campaign that he was an avowed defender of the interests of big business. He opposed all measures that would be in favor of the labor unions. Referring to the reform of the labor legislation that was in preparation in 1979 and 1980, he declared: "Bargaining on an industry-wide basis as they [the unions] do, I've thought for some time they should be subject to the same restraints that are imposed on industry and business."<sup>2</sup> He supported restrictions on the unions' right of representation in collective bargaining, insisting that bargaining on an industry-wide basis was detrimental to business. He came out strongly in

<sup>1</sup> *The Nation*, September 9, 1978, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, October 1-15, 1980, p. 13.

favor of anti-union acts, including the "right-to-work" laws. Reagan declared that he would support such a law in his state (California) if it were proposed there.<sup>1</sup>

The so-called "right-to-work" laws exist in 20 states of the country. Their purpose is to consolidate capital's eternal preference for the "individual contract". The aim of those laws is to legalize arbitrary decisions in settling the issues of wages and work conditions, to disunite workers by fanning selfish interests, and to ban the unions from being collective representatives of the workers' rights.

As the *UAW Solidarity* journal pointed out, Reagan is guided by the philosophy of big business and is concerned with the growth of its profits, fighting to repeal the law on minimum wages.<sup>2</sup> In 1966, Reagan opposed the Civil Rights Act, and in 1979, the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act.

President Reagan's first move in domestic policy was to lift controls over the price of oil and fuel, to the delight of the oil monopolies which, as American economists have computed, would receive an additional \$10 billion in profits in the subsequent few years.

On February 18, 1981, Reagan proposed a new economic program to Congress pretentiously named "A New Beginning". He opposed this program to the methods of economic regulation employed by the Democratic administrations. He insisted that all the previous administrations could not cope with the sharp deterioration in the American economy—the slowing down of the rate of growth, the decline in labor productivity, the permanent unemployment and galloping inflation—because they had been guided by Keynesian conclusions which, in his view, were unsuitable for the modern processes of stimulating economic growth. Reagan's New Beginning envisaged all-out support of the monopolies and an offensive against the interests of the working class.

All of the Reagan government's subsequent moves in domestic and foreign policy indicated a cardinal shift to the right and the dominance of conservative trends in it. They fully accorded with the ideological trend that came to be known as "neoconservatism". In foreign policy, neoconservatism implies a still more open and militant anti-com-

<sup>1</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, October 1-15, 1980, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

munism and anti-Sovietism, in domestic policy—rejection of the practice of stimulating the economy through extending government spending on welfare and increasing consumption by the broad masses.

Milton Friedman, a prominent advocate of the neoconservative position in the economic field and head of the Chicago economic school, sharply criticized the Keynesian principles of state intervention in the economy by which all US administrations since the 1930s had been governed. It is not the increase in welfare spending but aid to the corporations in capital accumulation and production expansion under conditions favorable to them that will, according to Friedman, be a real premise for solving the problems of inflation, employment, wages and, generally, improved well-being for all classes. Liberal ideas and the practice of increased welfare spending by the government came to be regarded as a "harmful experiment" and the main cause that had led to economic inefficiency, excessive control over business, a growth in non-productive spending, and swelling of the hureaucratic machine.

Neoconservatives of the Friedman type propose a "revolution" in the state's economic policy. Their mottoes of "getting rid of sentimentality" and "getting the government off the people's backs", find favor with the Reagan administration which has borrowed a great deal from them—mostly in matters of revising state aid to the economically and socially most underprivileged strata and ethnic minorities. To take the country out of its economic and social difficulties, the neo-conservatives believe, one must not be afraid of taking decisive measures, often unpopular and painful.

A shift to the right in the social and labor policy in the past 15 years was characteristic of both the Democratic and Republican parties' governments, but in the activities of the Reagan administration that bias became expressed most clearly and openly. The Reagan administration, linked with the most conservative elements in the Republican Party and in American society as a whole, vigorously proceeded to implement the ideas of a conservative turnabout of which Reagan had spoken already during his election campaign.

The Reagan administration has significantly expanded and increased pressure on the working class and the unions. Indicative in this respect are the President's appointments. Thus,

Raymond J. Donovan, vice-president of a major construction company, became Secretary of Labor. During the discussion of Donovan as a candidate in a Senate committee it came to light that that company had extensive links with criminal elements, including those that operated in the Teamsters' Union. Members of the Reagan administration, confirmed advocates of limiting the unions' rights, are either big businessmen themselves or closely connected with them. Thus, US Vice-President George Bush is closely associated with the oil monopolies of the Mid-West, Secretary of the Treasury Regan is a member of the Business Round Table, Defense Secretary Weinberger headed Bechtel, a major construction company; other members of the cabinet were also recruited from among major business managers and heads of business associations.

The AFL-CIO leadership headed by Kirkland appealed to the new President to maintain the "social contract" signed by the previous US President and the President of the AFL-CIO. Against the will of most union members, Kirkland promised Reagan complete support and cooperation if the latter should be guided by a policy of collaboration of labor and capital and refrain from a vigorous offensive against the unions. However, already Reagan's TV speech on the state of the American economy on February 5, 1981 showed that his government intended to increase pressure on the unions and restrict welfare spending.

Reagan compared the state of the American economy with the Great Depression, that is to say, the 1930s crisis. If all the 7 million unemployed were to be strung out in one line, he said, the line would stretch right across the whole of the country, from the Maine coast in the East to the shores of California in the West. For several years, the growth of inflation had been expressed in two-digit figures. Production of steel and cars had fallen especially sharply. The USA had once been ahead of all other countries in this area, while now it made only 19 per cent of its former output of steel.

The "new approach" manifested itself in a reduction nearly by half of appropriations for 105 government programs involving unemployment relief, social security and education. By this means the government expected to save some \$50 billion. But the money saved would be expended to increase the military budget.

As *UAW Solidarity* wrote, the unions were also worried about the extremely aggressive statements by Reagan and members of his government on foreign policy issues, against the SALT-2, in support of a more intense blockade of Cuba and of reactionary regimes in Latin America and South Korea, and about their encouragement of Israel's expansionist policy. The Reagan administration's subsequent domestic and foreign policy confirmed the public's worst fears.

*UAW Solidarity* wrote just before the 1980 election: "We're pointing out how Reagan has opposed almost every program to help workers—from unemployment insurance to Social Security to the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act... A Reagan presidency would be disastrous for working people."<sup>1</sup> This was borne out by Reagan's declared intention to abolish the Department of Education and to bring down the minimum wage rate for the young people.

The draft budget for 1982 envisaged further cuts in the social programs, which now numbered 300, while the number of needy American families receiving no aid from the government grew by 700,000. Welfare spending in 1983 would be cut by \$79 billion, and in 1986, by \$123.8 billion. The government proposed a new tax reform intended to bring down individual taxes by 10 per cent a year in the space of three years. But those whose incomes exceeded \$100,000 would get a 25 per cent reduction in taxes, while taxation of \$15,000 incomes would go down only by 5 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Secretary of the Treasury Regan stated quite frankly that it was "important to cut taxes for those in upper income brackets as they are the ones who save and invest most".<sup>3</sup>

The Reagan administration adheres to a much vaunted policy of encouraging the corporations through bringing down taxes and increasing the discount rates, which goes to show the Reagan administration's attitude to the poorest strata of the American population. Saving money by cutting welfare benefits deprives millions of the poor of a chance to receive scanty food rations at cut rates, which dooms them to hardships and even hunger. Besides, relief payments to the unemployed, whose numbers keep growing, will not be automati-

<sup>1</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, October 16-31, 1980, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *UE News*, February 23, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, February 20, 1981, p. 5.

cally prolonged. Even the reactionary US media observed that the Reagan administration's measures would result in heavy losses for more than 20 million, for their living standards would drop considerably.

Before the year was out, one of the authors of "Reagano-mics", Stockman, head of the reserve bureau, admitted that the government's economic policy was in an impasse, while its tax policy and other measures only brought greater profits to big business. Unemployment grew rapidly again. The reprisals against the striking air-traffic controllers were a telltale sign of the offensive against union rights.

Reagan's economic and social policy, helping consolidate the positions of the American big business within the country and in the competitive struggle in the international markets, leads to a further decline in the working people's living standards, deepening the social contradictions and the antagonisms in American society.

The US working class responds to the offensive of big business and the administration by strengthening its solidarity. Numerous marches and demonstrations were organized throughout the country by labor unions and other democratic organizations. On Labor Day, marked on September 7 in 1981, a mass demonstration and rally in New York were attended by 250,000. In his speech at the rally, AFL-CIO President Kirkland declared that the labor movement would continue its fight to make Congress introduce essential amendments to the Reagan administration's programs for cutbacks in social spending. "We grew fighting, and we are going to continue to fight," Kirkland said. "Struggle is the historic role of our movement."

UAW vice-president Marc Stepp criticized the government's policy even more incisively: "Labor wants peace, not war. Justice, not bigotry. Freedom, not oppression. Jobs, not welfare."<sup>1</sup> The huge demonstration that for many hours flooded Fifth Avenue, was held to the continual chant of "Fight, fight, fight".

The broad masses of America's working people realize more and more clearly that the Reagan administration's policy reflects the mood of those strata of the ruling class which

<sup>1</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, September 1981, p. 7.

regard any concessions to the working class as infringement on the powers-that-be. Various democratic coalitions are set up in the USA at the national and local levels to oppose the offensive launched by capital and the government.

President Reagan and his supporters are, however, afraid of further aggravation of the relations with the unions. At President Reagan's initiative, a meeting was held at the White House early in December 1981 with the AFL-CIO leaders. Reagan and Vice-President Bush, stressing their solidarity with the union bureaucracy on problems of foreign policy and defense of the country's national interests, tried to convince Kirkland and other labor leaders of the need to find a common language with the government and help it in the solution of many problems.

In principle, the AFL-CIO leadership does not reject cooperation with the Reagan administration on issues of "mutual interest". In the field of foreign policy, the AFL-CIO fully supported all of the President's moves toward reviving the cold war and expanding aggressive, militarist actions. In domestic policy, the AFL-CIO leaders asked the President to consider their proposals concerning the "social contract" coordinated with President Carter. But the AFL-CIO leadership, even if it were disposed to support the Reagan economic policy, will not be able to ignore the sharply increased dissatisfaction of the working people. Besides, Reagan rejected the AFL-CIO leadership's request to lift the sanctions against the air-traffic controllers' union and to withdraw the candidacy of his protégé for the post of Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board.

As a representative of the AFL-CIO stated, that meeting at the White House brought essentially no results, and the search for ways of establishing cooperation between the unions and the administration would continue.

The Reagan administration's anti-labor policy is only to some extent a subjective reflection of the conservative views of the President and his advisers. To a much greater extent it is a consequence of the general crisis of American capitalism and of the policy of "class collaboration".

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE WORKING PEOPLE AND THE GROWING CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE LABOR UNIONS

#### Changes in the Composition and Structure of Hired Labor

The long-term trend toward the destabilization of the economic development of the USA is making a serious impact on the economic relations between labor and capital.

Intensifying the use of scientific and technological revolution (STR) to increase surplus value, monopoly capital transforms powerful creative forces of science and technology into destructive ones. The advantages following from the changes in the structure and composition of the working class under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution devolve on the monopolies only. The working class—society's main productive force—is deprived of a chance to enjoy the fruits of the growing social productive power of labor. Most of the economically active population steadily becomes an object of increasing exploitation by the monopolies.

American bourgeois sociology tries to belittle the role of the working class, which is the decisive factor in the growth and renovation of production under the conditions of the STR. Extended capital reproduction cannot take place without corresponding reproduction of capitalist relations. It is a situation described by Marx as "more capitalists or larger capitalists at this pole, more wage-workers at that... Accumulation of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat."<sup>1</sup>

The Marxist-Leninist conclusions concerning the growing proletarianization and further polarization of capitalist society are opposed by the apologist theories of "the new middle class", "deproletarianization", of "bourgeois integration" of

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, pp. 575-76.

the US working class, its "integration" within the capitalist system. Two principal trends can be traced in the various anti-Marxist views. One of them includes only manual workers in the working class, thus ignoring the qualitative shifts both among the white-collar workers and in the nature of the activity of manual workers, that is, the proletarianization of the mass of employees. Other theoreticians believe that a significant number of manual workers, those that are relatively highly paid, are integrated in the bourgeois system. The burden of these theories is that they separate many strata of the working class from that class and include them in the "middle class". Bourgeois ideologues give apologist interpretations of the changes in the occupational structure of the work force.

These theoreticians argue that the proletariat is "on the wane", is being ousted by white collars, and a new social structure emerges, all of which is linked with the transformation of "traditional society" in the USA into "post-industrial" or "technetronic". The basic proposition that the working class is the most important productive force of society is thus rejected. Neither the working class's right nor its ability for constructive activity and initiative in the solution of many important problems are recognized.

Bourgeois ideologues insist that the army of hired labor is being continually eroded and fragmented. Daniel Bell believes that "even at its most comprehensive definition, the blue-collar group is in an increasing minority in advanced or post-industrial society".<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the share of persons engaged in manual labor in the total work force has a tendency toward reduction in comparison with the white-collar category. But, in the first place, the rate of this process is far from what bourgeois scholars say it is, and, which is most important, though the relative share of manual laborers diminishes, their absolute numbers grow. Second, special emphasis must be placed on the fact that the social composition of persons being exploited and participating in the production of surplus value is steadily growing; 90 per cent of the active population engaged in

<sup>1</sup> D. Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society. A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 148.

agriculture, industry or services are hired workers living by selling their labor.<sup>1</sup>

The dynamics of the manpower engaged in material production and in service industries is determined by the totality of the objective conditions of production development, the rate of advance in the technical equipment and the level of labor productivity. The transformation of most of the active population in the USA into an army of hired labor is organically linked with the qualitative development of manual workers, the formation of new and more mature contingents of such workers and a permanent growth of the mass of mental workers.

The introduction of the attainments of the scientific and technological progress in the US economy continually affects the structure of the economy: new branches emerge, production technologies change, including areas which previously were only partially involved in the technological upheaval (agriculture, commodity and currency circulation, transportation, communications, etc.). The essential changes in the occupational structure of the active population are directly reflected in its class composition.

Marxist-Leninist theory has never considered the working class as a frozen category outside the framework of historical development. The statistics on the serious changes in the composition and structure of hired manpower confirm this proposition. The boundaries of the working class in the USA have been considerably extended through the leveling of the character and conditions of labor and changes in the relationship between the material and non-material spheres of the economy.

Various occupational and other groups within the American working class differ in their economic position, degree of organization, psychological make-up, and level of class consciousness. The STR has introduced significant changes in their structure. There has been a substantive increase in the numerical strength of those strata which combine manual and mental labor in their production activity, or are only engaged in mental labor. It is important to stress that the share of skilled labor is growing. Table 1 (where the figures

<sup>1</sup> Gil Green, *What's Happening to Labor*, International Publishers, New York, 1976, p. 17.

read "thousand persons") indicates the character of the changes in the structure of civil manpower (agriculture and the unemployed not considered).<sup>1</sup>

Table 1

Category of Em- ployed Persons	1965	1979	Category of Em- ployed Persons	1965	1979
Blue-collar workers	26,247	31,207	White-collar workers	31,852	48,923
foremen, team lead- ers	9,216	12,526	professional and tech- nical	8,872	15,196
operatives, adjusters, repairmen at automat- ed com- plexes	13,345	14,285	managers and adminis- trators	7,340	10,296
shop hands, unskilled workers	3,686	4,396	sales-workers	4,499	6,012
			clerical workers	11,141	17,419

These statistics show that the number of workers in the sphere of production grows, especially of skilled workers and those servicing automated and conveyor systems, and that the number of persons engaged in mostly non-manual labor also increases. In 1979, white collars were 1.5 times the number of the blue. In 1978, hired workers engaged in non-manual labor in all the branches of the economy constituted 50.4 per cent of the total number of hired employees (in 1950, 37.5 per cent). But, as Gil Green aptly pointed out, the boundaries between these categories are mobile: "In many occupations the old distinctions between blue- and white-collar workers are now fading. The blue collar is becoming gray and the white collar frayed."<sup>2</sup>

Between 1950 and 1977, the share of the working class in the active population of the USA grew from 72.3 to 76.6 per cent. Changes took place within the various strata of the

<sup>1</sup> Computed from *Statistical Abstract of the USA, 1979*, p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> G. Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

working class. In 1950, the industrial proletariat was 22.5 million strong (53 per cent of the whole of the working class), while in 1977 the absolute numbers of industrial workers reached 30.1 million, but their relative share in the total working class dropped to 39.3 per cent. At the same time, the proletariat engaged in trade and clerical work grew both in absolute figures (18 million in 1950 and 45.5 million in 1977) and in its relative share in the working class (42.5 and 59.3 per cent respectively).

The scientific and technological progress establishes new relations between mental and manual labor, between those engaged in productive and non-productive spheres.

Among other changes in the composition of the US working class it is important to note a considerable drop in the average age, a growth in the number of working women, particularly married ones, an increase in the number of non-white workers, a drop in the number of agricultural workers, a relatively high growth rate of the number of persons employed in the South and Far West compared with the historically older industrial areas of the North-East and the Mid-West, and a general rise in the level of skills.

The modern working class is a broader social category than industrial workers only. It also includes a numerous stratum of employees engaged in trade and in clerical work.

Apart from the fact that the development and changes in material production increase employment in the sphere of services, one must also take into account such factors as expanding sales of commodities, the development of the service industries and the growing parasitic needs of the bourgeois class. Of paramount importance is the growing militarization and an increase in the military and police apparatus of the USA.

Thus, serious changes take place in the composition and structure of hired manpower conditioned by changes in the social division of labor, the needs of modern large-scale production and increased employment in the non-productive sphere. It was already Marx and Engels who showed the class affinity of persons selling their labor, both manual and mental. Discussing the division of labor at a factory, Marx pointed out three principal categories of workers: those who are actually employed on the machines, mere attendants of



these workmen, and highest-skilled workers—engineers, mechanics and joiners.<sup>1</sup>

The scientific and technological progress essentially changes the role and place of the third category of workers in production, since the share of blue-collar workers has a tendency toward reduction, while the share of the highly skilled stratum, which is increasingly recruited from the group of engineers and technicians, is growing. In 1961, there were 1,359,000 technicians, engineers and research workers engaged in industrial production, and in 1970 1,860,400. In the same period, the number of technicians grew by 40 per cent, engineers by 34 per cent, and research workers by 47 per cent. In the 1950s, there were 32 production workers per one engineer in the manufacturing industries, while at the beginning of the 1970 only 14.

Lenin developed a dialectical approach to evaluating the role in production and position in society of technical intelligentsia and white-collar employees. He emphasized that "capitalism increasingly deprives the intellectual of his independent position, converts him into a hired worker and threatens to lower his living standard".<sup>2</sup>

Present-day technical intelligentsia, just as some of the managerial personnel, in the capitalist countries live by selling their labor. Under the STR conditions, their aggregate wages are much lower than the value they create for the owners of capital by their complex creative labor. That is the reason why major US companies hunt high and low for researchers, skilled managers and technicians not only in the USA but also abroad.

White-collar employees perform the necessary functions in the process of capital reproduction not only in the sphere of material production but also in circulation, for they are part of the social aggregate worker. Under the present conditions, the extraction of maximum surplus value is achieved at the expense of a body of hired workers that is varied in its composition and has grown manifold.

The great mass of white-collar employees perform subor-

<sup>1</sup> See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Review, Karl Kautsky, 'Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm. Eine Antikritik'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 202.

dinate functions and own no means of production. In their socio-economic position and living conditions, most white-collar employees and professionals differ little from workers. Relative to means of production they form a certain unity. Here, there is no fundamental difference between a manual worker and a mental worker, since both of them are hired workers and are opposed to capital as owner of the means of production. They oppose it as the aggregate worker opposes aggregate capital. The race after maximum profits in capitalist production depresses the creative abilities of highly qualified mental workers engaged mostly in monotonous work. Just as most working people, they are affected by the growing economic instability, unemployment and falling social status.

In a number of cases, e.g., in commerce, service industries and even in material production, the wages or salaries of white-collar employees are often at the same level as the wages of semi-skilled workers or even below it. Thus, in 1965, the average annual pay of those employed in trade equaled 79 per cent of the average wages of those in the manufacturing industry, and in 1978, 74 per cent.

Despite the growing numbers of clerical and trade employees and the rising role in production of engineers, technicians and research workers, the decisive force of social progress is still the industrial proletariat concentrated at large-scale high-technology enterprises, at the main centers of the economy—at giant plants that are the heart of production. Production workers still remain the prime productive force, the leading class capable of opposing capitalist monopolies, and the most consistent advocate of the interests of all the working people.

The share of high-skilled workers rises, as does the educational level of the active population. The main body of skilled personnel is concentrated at the decisive links in the economy. In the USA, persons without a high-school education practically cannot at present get a job that would ensure a subsistence minimum. Skilled industrial workers servicing automated and electronic systems (operators, adjusters, repairmen) play a prime role in producing value and surplus value. In metalworking, there are only 183 workers of average proficiency and 18 shop hands for every thousand highly skilled workers, 220 and 17 respectively in the car industry, 346 and 28 in electrical engineering, and 456 and 31 in the textile industry.

The dynamics of the work force structure in the USA confirms the Marxist-Leninist proposition about the leading role of the factory proletariat in the formation of the working class. Using the USA as an example, Lenin showed the great importance of the formation of the proletariat in flow-line conveyor production both for raising labor productivity and for consolidating the forces of all the strata of the proletariat in the struggle against capitalist exploitation.<sup>1</sup>

At present, those strata in the US proletariat which are engaged in automated production, with their higher level of general education and special training, are the vanguard in the struggle of the entire working class for their economic interests and social rights.

Along with the general trend for the workers' higher level of training and education, there is a growing differentiation among hired workers. At the summit of the pyramid are the managerial and administrative personnel directly linked with big business. These are followed by qualified engineers and researchers. Close to this nucleus is a considerable body of persons with higher or incomplete higher education. This group as a whole constitutes nearly 20 per cent of the aggregate labor force. The bulk of the workers have a high-school education. However, there are many who left high school long before graduation. In the early 1970s, according to *U.S. News & World Report*, there were "25 million people already in jobs who can't read well enough to move up to a better one, 3 million adult illiterates and 8 million people suffering from reading disorders"<sup>2</sup>.

The apologists of capitalism reduce the entire problem of the socio-economic position of the working class to satisfying its material needs. But the concept of "living standards" is much broader, for it includes the entire complex of the worker's conditions of labor and life, the possibility of satisfying varied intellectual needs, along with the material ones.

Under the STR conditions, the workers' labor is greatly intensified, and they themselves are suppressed as individuals. "The new technology," Gus Hall wrote, "is providing the

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Original Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, pp. 79-80.

<sup>2</sup> *U. S. News & World Report*, March 9, 1970, p. 90.

monopoly corporations with an instrument of production and, even more, with a new demonic instrument of speed up... Workers in mass production industries have become cogs, robots in an automated process in the most controlled, integrated, brutal system of exploitation ever devised... These devices are used to drive the workers to the very limits of human endurance, which show up in the shortened life spans, in the medical records, in the criminal increase in industrial accidents."<sup>1</sup> The sweating system leads to the squandering away of physical, mental and nervous energy. A report prepared for a government agency says that "the impact of technology has been acutely felt by the blue-collar worker—not necessarily because it puts him out of a job, but because it lowers his status and satisfaction from the job".<sup>2</sup>

The same conclusion was drawn by Richard M. Pfeffer, who found employment for a while as a simple worker in order to understand better the role of a laborer in the process of capitalist production. He wrote that workers took no satisfaction in their activity.<sup>3</sup>

US workers themselves confirm such conclusions. "It's hard to take pride when you work for a large steel company. It's hard to take pride in a bridge you're never going to cross, in a door you're never going to open. You're mass-producing things and you never see the end of it." These are the words of a steelworker quoted by *U.S. News & World Report*.<sup>4</sup>

American sociologists Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin cite numerous facts of shamefully rude treatment of workers in their book *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*. "American auto workers," they wrote, "were told by their mass media that they had one of the world's highest standards of living. They were not told that they also had one of the world's highest and most gruelling standards of work."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gus Hall, *The Energy Rip-Off. Cause & Cure*, International Publishers, New York, 1974, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Work in America. Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> R.M. Pfeffer, *Working for Capitalism*, New York, 1979, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, November 27, 1972, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Dan Georgakas/Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying. A Study in Urban Revolution*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1975, p. 33.



An analysis of the changes in the system and of the growing structural complexity of various sections of hired labor in the USA shows the untenability of the bourgeois ideologues' allegations about reduction of the share and role of the working class in the active population and in the life of American society, about "erosion" of the proletariat and "integration" in the bourgeois socio-economic system of the greater part of the working class, about its full support of the socio-economic policy of state capitalism. The real life of American society shows that, on the contrary, the basis for class conflicts in that society has become significantly extended, and that those conflicts are stimulated in new ways and expressed in new forms both in the economic struggle, traditional for that country, between labor and capital, and in the aggravated antagonisms between the working class's interests and the socio-economic policy of the US ruling circles.

#### The Achievements and Shortcomings in Working People's Organization

The historical process of the development of labor unions and expansion of their influence, in the first place among those strata of the working people which move into the foreground of the production process, is intimately linked with the socio-economic factors of the development of the whole of American society. The deepening scientific and technological revolution, the development of state-monopoly capitalism, the emergence of powerful monopoly conglomerates, including transnational ones, made the problem of further improvement of the structure of the unions and the growth of their numerical strength extremely vital.

The involvement in the unions of large numbers of workers in the major monopolized branches of the economy, the development of the progressive production principle of union organization have greatly consolidated the social strength of organized labor in the USA. More than two-fifths of all the union members are employed in 5 branches of the economy: transport, metallurgy, engineering, construction and the service industries. Up to 90 per cent of the blue- and white-collar employees in the manufac-

turing industry (at factories with a work force of one thousand or more) are organized.

Concentration of union members in the key branches of the country's economy and accumulation of considerable funds by these unions strengthen their positions vis-à-vis the monopolies, creating favorable opportunities for effectively waging the economic struggle.

The assets of many major labor unions run into enormous sums—hundreds of millions of dollars. The majority of US unions collect more than \$500 million in dues per annum.<sup>1</sup> For example, the total assets in money, securities and real estate belonging to the International Union of United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) were worth more than \$400 million in 1980.

The 1960s and 1970s were marked by contradictory phenomena in the unions' organizational work. Despite the fact that powerful unions significantly increased their numbers, the share of union members on the whole declined. In 1966, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters was 1,651,000 strong, while in 1976 it grew by 14.4 per cent, reaching the 1,889,000 mark; the Steelworkers' Union numbered 1,068,000 and 1,300,000 respectively (a growth of 21.7 per cent). The association of machinists and workers of the aviation and aerospace industries also grew considerably: 836,000 in 1966 and 917,000 in 1976 (a growth of 9.7 per cent). White-collar unions showed an even greater growth (Retail Clerks' Union: 500,000 in 1966 and 699,000 in 1976, i.e., a 39.8 per cent increase). The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees comprised 281,000 in 1966 and 750,000 in 1976 (an almost three-fold growth). The membership of the National Education Association increased at an approximately the same rate: 125,000 in 1966 and 446,000 in 1976.<sup>2</sup>

In the same period, there was a decrease in the membership of one of the major US labor unions, the United

<sup>1</sup> B.J. Widick, *Labor Today. The Triumphs and Failures of Unionism in the United States*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1964, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Ph.L. Martin, *Contemporary Labor Relations*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., Belmont, California, 1979, p. 29.

Auto Workers. In 1966, it was 1,403,000 strong, and in 1977, 1,358,000 (i.e., 3.2 per cent less)<sup>1</sup>. It should be taken into account that in this, as well as in other major unions, there are a great many members who either left their jobs because of age or are unemployed.

The major unions are in the vanguard of the working-class economic struggle. Their demands on the monopolies serve as a standard for all organized workers and also affect wage increases of the unorganized.

The major unions oppose the most powerful corporations. They can exert pressure on them not only through collective bargaining but also, if concessions are not forthcoming, by calling strikes which at times cover whole industries and even most important sectors of the entire economy. Major unions also influence the economic and socio-political life of a number of states. Thus, they come out as centers of the most efficient part of the proletariat.

At the same time, there are serious shortcomings in the union movement both in the organization of the proletariat and especially in implementing a common class line in relation to the bourgeoisie. The degree of organization of American blue- and white-collar workers (as well as the very character of their organization) is insufficient for the proletariat to unite its forces for opposing the offensive of monopoly conglomerates.

This situation is largely explained by the fact that the unions are confronted by the united strength of the monopolies and the state, which erects serious obstacles for involving the majority of US workers in their class organizations. The right-to-work laws effective in 20 states are called upon to play a special role here. Under the Taft-Hartley Act, a complex bureaucratic system of rules has been set up which markedly limits the involvement of new members in the unions.

However, the "worker aristocracy" and the reactionary union bureaucracy collaborating with the government-monopoly apparatus also bear just as great share of responsibility for this situation. They endeavor to disunite the working class in order to keep the union membership under the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

influence of bourgeois ideology and consumer psychology while gaining economic concessions for its privileged sections, and to bind the unions to the bourgeois socio-economic system as its subordinated adjuncts.

The bulwark of unionism is, as is well known, the branches of mass production with high concentration of the work force: engineering, metallurgy, construction. But their share in the economy is now decreasing, while the spheres of service, finances and light industry are growing. And the latter are inadequately unionized, just as small businesses are. Although a numerous labor union was organized in retail trade, only 7.8 per cent of all those employed were union members in 1974, and union membership in service industries was not too high either (only 13.6 per cent) in the same year.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1965 and 1976, the overall membership of the unions grew, but their relative share among those employed, particularly in industrial production, decreased considerably, as can be seen from the following statistics<sup>2</sup>:

Labor unions	1965	1976
AFL-CIO (in thousands)	15,604	16,699
Independent or unaffiliated unions (in thousands)	2,915	4,472
Union membership, total (in thousands)	18,519	21,171
Per cent of total labor force	22.4	20.3
Per cent of non-agricultural employment	28.4	24.5

This tendency persisted in the subsequent years as well. In 1979, union membership in the USA was 22 per cent of the entire work force in non-agricultural production, while in the FRG it was 37 per cent, in the United Kingdom 44, in Japan 34, and in Belgium and Sweden 70 per cent each.<sup>3</sup>

According to a Labor Department survey, there were 78 million unorganized workers in the USA in 1980.<sup>4</sup> In the northeastern states, 70 per cent of textile workers are union members, while in the Southern states, only 20 per cent.

<sup>1</sup> *Business Week*, May 22, 1978, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1979, p. 427.

<sup>3</sup> Ph.L. Martin, *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Daily World*, May 23, 1980, p. 7.

The overall involvement of workers in the unions in the Southern states is merely 14 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

The industrialization of the South, growing employment in service industries, and the emergence of a large body of the clerical proletariat, engineers and technicians have created a favorable situation for unionizing large masses of employees in the most important branches of the economy. But that task is far from solved.

As we have already pointed out, in the 1960s and 1970s, the unions not only failed to increase their membership, but even lost a great many members due to mass dismissals linked with automation of production. Union membership fell in a number of the most important branches: coal, ore-mining, metal-working and textile industries and on the railways. In the coal industry, for instance, where previously nearly 70 per cent of miners were organized, the greater part of coal is now produced at mines without unions. In construction, where union members comprise two-thirds of those employed, more than half contracts are carried out without collective agreements. According to Labor Department statistics, 86 per cent of low-wage workers are employed in non-union establishments.<sup>2</sup>

Discrimination of Blacks both in social life and in the unions themselves, the bargains union leaders make with employers at the expense of Blacks and other ethnic minorities among the working people are a very grave obstacle in organizing the workers in the South. Unorganized workers, especially Blacks and Puerto Ricans, belong as a rule to the "poor family" category.

The policy of the employers and reactionary union leaders aimed at creating a gap between the high-paid part of the working class and its main body has a negative effect on the labor movement. It is on this basis that the disunity within the unions arises. The activity of rank-and-file union members and those functionaries who express the true attitudes of the working masses is growing.

A serious drawback of the US union movement is lack

<sup>1</sup> *Working Lives. The Southern Exposure. History of Labor in the South*, ed. by Marc M. Miller, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, p. 359.

<sup>2</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 1972, pp. 11-12.

of ideological and organizational cohesion. Some leaders have expressed their grave concern about this situation. At the AFL-CIO Convention in October 1973, Jerry Wurf, President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, proposed a commission to consider the question of changing the structure of the labor unions and stepping up the AFL-CIO's organizational drive. But, under pressure from George Meany, the proposal was rejected. A short while earlier, Meany said in an interview that, to him, the question of membership "doesn't make any difference". He explained: "We made tremendous strides in this country under Samuel Gompers, and his percentage of the labor force was very tiny compared with what we've got now."

Despite the existence of strong unions in the major branches of the economy, the unions do not cover 55 per cent of those employed in the manufacturing industry, 25 per cent in construction, and more than 80 per cent in trade, service and the government apparatus. At present, more than half of the US work force are employed in the sphere of service, while 70 per cent of all union members are production workers.

Technological progress and changes in the structure of the working class demand not only a growth in the union membership but also changes in their structure, elimination of separations on the craft principle and large-scale industrial organization so as to fight monopoly conglomerates more effectively. The disunity of the labor movement and the influence on it of bourgeois ideology remain the principal foundations of the policy of "class collaboration".

Despite all the obstacles and difficulties, the process of consolidation of the militant forces of the working class steadily develops in the American union movement. A new and progressive trend has emerged in it—one toward creating a united front of workers of various trades within each branch of industry, specifically, uniting different unions on the basis of their production affiliation. The unions of printers and publishing-house workers merged; the workers of the rubber, oil, chemical and atomic industries have set up a united powerful union numbering 600,000. The union

<sup>1</sup> *Business Week*, February 21, 1972, pp. 27-28.

that resulted from the merger of the labor organizations in commerce, service industries and hospitals is 800,000 strong. Workers in the sewing and shoe-making industries have also founded a united organization. Many small unions have become part of the powerful unions of teamsters, steelworkers and auto workers.

This shows that the US working class closes its ranks in opposing the offensive mounted by the monopolies and the government. Because of this, a number of major unions have enough power to defend their rights even in spite of a general trend toward falling wages.

The growth of white-collar workers' unions brings about a rise in their activity in the economic and socio-political spheres. Associations and coalitions are founded which unite various organizations of government employees, such as the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the National Education Association. The following statistics give an idea of the changes in the numerical strength of the unions of government employees and retail clerks<sup>1</sup> (see Table 2):

Table 2

Trade unions, federations and associations	Membership (in thousands)		gain (per cent)
	1960s	1970s	
The American Federation of Government Employees	70.3	324.0	362.2
The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees	210	444.5	111.7
Teachers	56.2	205.3	265.3
Retail Clerks	342.0	605.2	76.9
Communications Workers	259.9	421.6	62.2
Service Employees	272.0	435.0	59.9

It should be noted that 40 to 60 per cent of the membership of the unions of federal and local employees, communications workers and service employees are manual workers.

<sup>1</sup> *Business Week*, October 2, 1971, p. 77.

New forms of contacts have emerged between university professors and the labor union movement. By 1973, more than 100,000 teachers were members of various union organizations, whereas in 1968 the figure was a mere 10,000. The largest organization, the American Association of University Professors, has a membership of more than 100,000. Formally, it is not a labor union, but its 1972 convention recognized the importance of collective settlements. The National Education Association joined the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees to form the American Federation of Government Employees.

In recent years, the drive toward organization has also intensified among engineers and technicians. In the 1970s, there were 92 different associations or organizations of this category of workers. For instance, back in 1970, 5,000 researchers of the Lockheed Corporation founded a branch of the AFL-CIO. In 1975, teachers, engineers and technicians had 210 associations; 173 of them, uniting 2.6 million,<sup>1</sup> received the status of labor unions or joined unions.

There are no clear views among union leaders as to the type of organization suitable for engineers and technicians and the forms of their involvement in the union movement. Research workers themselves want to have separate organizations and do not always show an interest for joining forces with production workers. In 1967, 17 of the AFL-CIO affiliated organizations of research and professional workers formed their own council.

In the early 1970s, more than 80,000 employees, many of whom were engineers and technicians employed at car plants, joined the union. In 1972, the council of engineering and technical workers of machine-building, affiliated to the AFL-CIO, united 61,046 persons. Another organization of engineers and technicians, the Association of Machinists, also a member of the federation, was 31,098 strong.

In 1978, more than 90,000 white collars joined 102 locals of the UAW. Among them were engineers, technicians, mechanics, computer operators and clerks. UAW Vice-President Martin Gerbert pointed to the union's commitment

<sup>1</sup> *Directory of National Unions and Employee Associations*, 1975, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, 1977, pp. 57-58.

to bring the benefits of the union to white-collar workers.<sup>1</sup> F. Nigro, an American specialist in labor relations, believed that the growing activity of white collars basically expressed the rebellion of mental workers who reappraised their social role and were in the process of reshaping their social consciousness.

The government and monopolies are trying to weaken the workers' social power, to limit the unions' rights and to prevent them from throwing off the influence of the two-party system. The consolidation of manpower, and the growing desire for unity with the entire mass of the working people assume exceptional importance. The growing discontent among the working masses is an indication of the instability of the entire socio-political system in the USA.

#### Growing Exploitation and Falling Real Wages of the Working Class

The 1960s and 1970s were marked by a further aggravation of the class struggle in American society. Among the grave problems, both short-term and long-term, into which the USA ran in that period, the economic ones became the focus of that struggle. In those years, the instability of economic development grew, and contradictions between production and consumption deepened. At the same time, the trend toward capitalist socialization continued to develop, as did the state-monopoly mechanism of extracting maximal surplus value, and exploitation was stepped up. All of this directly affected the economic condition of the American working class.

Manipulating the statistics on the growth of nominal wages, bourgeois theoreticians and historians do their best to camouflage the fact that the gap is widening between the share of the working class in the national income and the growing riches of the ruling class. They ignore the growing control by government agencies not only over labor relations but also over the whole of the working class's economic and socio-cultural life. Problems of the living standards of the working masses are more often than not considered outside their

<sup>1</sup> UAW Solidarity, April 14, 1978, p. 15.

relation to the concrete conditions characteristic of certain stages in the scientific and technological progress and, which is most important, without taking into account the role of the latter in the sharp increase in the cost of manpower.

In his day, Lenin pointed out that rationalization and improvements in production in the USA invariably stepped up the exploitation of the working people: "All these vast improvements are introduced to the detriment of the workers, for they lead to their still greater oppression and exploitation."<sup>1</sup> Concentration and centralization of production and capital, the growing specialization, the formation of industrial conglomerates and transnational monopoly corporations have vastly increased the economic and non-economic oppression of the working class. Gus Hall wrote: "Many factors contribute to the new mass mood—among them the people's awareness of the potential productivity of the new level of science and technology and their own stagnating or deteriorating conditions."<sup>2</sup>

Improving the methods of exploiting the working class, the major monopoly corporations directly rely on government bodies and the government's labor policy.

At the end of the 1970s, there were over 200,000 industrial corporations in the USA, but the biggest 500 received 79 per cent of all the profits and accounted for 76 per cent of all those employed and two-thirds of the output sold.<sup>3</sup>

As a Senate committee indicated, a few conglomerates have enormous political and economic power owing to an extreme degree of concentration. 130 corporations accumulate some 25 per cent of the assets of all US corporations, while 13 biggest corporations have 40 per cent of the assets of these corporations, which amounts to nearly 10 per cent of the assets of all American corporations.

Bourgeois ideologues, distorting the economic essence of the monopolies and their role in the socio-economic life, spread the theories of "democratization" of capital allegedly associated with the mass marketing of stocks

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, "The Taylor System—Man's Enslavement by the Machine", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> G. Hall, *Imperialism Today. An Evaluation of Major Issues and Events of Our Time*, p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> UAW Solidarity, May 20, 1974.

and shares. But all talk about distribution of property between small investors is meaningless as long as 82.2 per cent of all stocks in the USA belong to 1.6 per cent of the country's adult population, that is, to big capitalists and top managers.<sup>1</sup> "The large monopoly corporations," wrote the progressive American author Gil Green, "constitute an increasingly autocratic, anti-social corporate fiefdom over the country. The more immediate effects are disastrous, contributing greatly to the constant rise in living costs."<sup>2</sup>

US monopoly capital puts in a great deal of effort into retaining its leading positions in the international division of labour. With this aim in view, it resorts to restructuring production on a qualitatively new technological basis and to intensifying the exploitation of labor. The last few decades have been characterized by efforts to deprive the US working class of its economic gains.

The inequality of incomes keeps growing. In 1972, *Business Week* wrote that 1.5 million richest Americans had enormous wealth concentrated in their hands—\$1,000 billion. In 1975, one-fifth of all US families received 43.4 per cent of the national income, while the poorest one-fifth received only 4.3 per cent. The richest families (0.5 per cent of the population) with incomes of \$100,000 and more were 50 times as rich as the statistical average American.

US monopolies receive multi-billion profits from the exploitation of the peoples of other countries, billions upon billions are extracted from the superexploitation of Blacks, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and other ethnic minorities within the country, but the main mass of profits—up to 90 per cent—is created by the exploitation of workers in the key areas of the economy.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the obvious facts, the monopoly apologists allege that labor remuneration in the USA grows at a faster rate than in other countries, while the gains in wages made by the working class do not correspond to its contri-

<sup>1</sup> F. Lundberg, *The Rich and the Super-Rich*, Bantam Books, Inc., New York, 1968, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Gil Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> *Political Affairs*, November 1968, p. 17.

bution to the production of new commodities. The conclusion is drawn from this that it is the labor unions who are to blame for the growing inflation. As Engels once wrote, "the strangest thing is that, although the working class fights for only a fraction of its own product, it is often enough accused of actually robbing the capitalist!"<sup>1</sup>

The living standards of the American working class are a historical category, and many decades passed before they took shape. Many durables have become elementary requirements of life and a necessary condition of the reproduction of the labor force. But that does not at all mean that the American working class has reached, as bourgeois propaganda asserts, the level of the "middle class" or even come close to the bourgeoisie in the level of consumption.

The wage increases in the post-WW II period were by no means a gift from the monopolies. They were gained through hard class struggle and reflected an objective process of a growth in the value of labor and, which is the main thing, were accompanied by an increase in exploitation. "A noticeable increase in wages," Marx wrote, "presupposes a rapid growth of productive capital. The rapid growth of productive capital brings about an equally rapid growth of wealth, luxury, social wants, social enjoyments. Thus, although the enjoyments of the worker have risen, the social satisfaction that they give has fallen in comparison with the increased enjoyments of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the worker, in comparison with the state of development of society in general."<sup>2</sup>

Although there is a definite group of highly paid workers in the USA, there is also the limited solvency of the population, a growth in taxes, inflation, and a decrease in the real wages. The volume of material expenditures necessary for the reproduction of the labor force keeps growing. The intensification of the consumption of manpower by capital inevitably leads to an increase in its cost. The latter is increasingly determined by the needs not only

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, "Die Trade-Unions", in Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 19, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1962, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx, "Wage Labour and Capital", in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 216.



in food, housing and clothes but also in better training, education and health services, in the service and recreation. A more intensive exploitation by capital of the mental and physical energy of the hired laborer demands changes in the scope and forms of restoring the energy expended.

The restoration of the worker's physical and nervous energy and instruction in the necessary general and professional knowledge require much greater expenditure on everyday and cultural needs. The development of education and health services has become a most important condition of social reproduction. In modern America, many aspects of the social battles cannot be fully evaluated unless one takes into account that the class differences are most acute in the consumption of services.

It should also be taken into account that, as official US statistics show, the average annual growth rate of nominal wages was, in the first half of the 1970s, 2 to 8 times higher in Europe and Japan than in the USA. *Fortune* wrote that in the chemical, textile and some other industries in the FRG hourly wages were higher than in the parallel US industries.

According to the US industrial census of 1967, the total sum of production workers' wages equalled \$81 billion, or 31.2 per cent of the \$259.3 billion worth of value added in the process of production. The difference between these two figures equalling \$178.3 billion (or 221 per cent) is the surplus value produced.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1970s, automation combined with cybernetics and electronics began to develop in the production technology in the USA. In 1978, a third of the country's entire capital investment in industry was linked with the development of the highest forms of technology. A most important result of this was the huge growth in the profits of the monopolies, on the one hand, and a decrease in the remuneration of labor, on the other.

*Labor Today*, a journal of the national organization of rank-and-file union members, was fully justified in the assertion that American monopolies endeavored to compen-

<sup>1</sup> V. Perlo, *The Unstable Economy. Booms and Recessions in the United States since 1945*, International Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 26.

sate for their losses in the international markets by intensifying the exploitation of labor and reducing the costs involved. The growth of nominal wages in itself does not, of course, adequately characterize the workers' actual position, as it is accompanied by a more intense exploitation of the workers and a growth in the capitalists' profits. In 1969, the average annual wages of a US industrial worker were \$6,508. But added value per worker was \$21,191, that is, \$3.26 for each dollar the employers spent on manpower, and in 1978 that figure rose to \$3.7. Even if we subtract the corporations' expenditures on the administrative and technical personnel and advertising, added value is still twice the size of the expenditures on wages and salaries.<sup>1</sup>

According to the US Census Bureau, average wages of an industrial worker in the electric and radiotechnical industries in 1970 were \$6,681 for 1,956 hours of working time. During the same time, each worker produced \$22,466 worth of added value. Thus, each worker was actually paid for 582 hours only, while 1,374 hours were spent working to enrich Westinghouse Electric, General Electric and other companies.<sup>2</sup> The profit gained by these monopolies in 1979 was \$5,903 per each worker employed (\$1,523 in the early 1970s).<sup>3</sup> The same situation obtained in the other manufacturing industries.

Inflation has become a grave and permanent affliction of the entire economic and social life. Military spending, the maintenance of US military bases, direct acts of aggression and aid to reactionary regimes are the principal stimuli of inflation and increased taxation. The social security budget is being reduced. The inflationary price rises are the result of a deliberate class policy of the monopolies. Workers' wages, which lag behind consumer prices, are particularly hard hit by these rises.

Monopolies violate their agreements with the unions, demanding that provisions for automatic wage increases to cover price rises should be struck from collective agreements. By the end of the 1970s, consumer prices more

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, July 1975, p. 33; October 1980, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *UE News*, March 19, 1973, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, April 7, 1980, p. 3.



than doubled compared with 1965 (1967—100 per cent, 1978—193.2 per cent).<sup>1</sup> In the 10-year period ending in 1979, consumer prices rose by 86.9 per cent, while wages grew only by 83.5 per cent, and during the same period corporate profits after taxes rose by 290.8 per cent.<sup>2</sup> The cost of health services increased catastrophically. In 1967, hospital treatment cost \$311 a month, and in 1976, \$1,017. "Inflation," George Meany wrote in the AFL-CIO organ, "is a grave problem for workers and their families... It eats away their buying power and erodes their living standards... Recession and rising unemployment spell certain economic disaster for working people."<sup>3</sup>

Some labor unions (by no means all) succeeded in introducing escalator clauses in their contracts envisaging wage increases to match price rises. But these increases lag considerably behind the annual cost of living index. Thus, between 1970 and 1974, the cost of living rose annually by 6.7 per cent, while the escalator increase in wages was only 3.7 per cent.<sup>4</sup> Besides, in 1976, 6 million workers received such increases, while in 1980 only 5.5 million, or 5 per cent of all hired labor. The stagnation in real wages, which started in 1965, is a serious blow for the working class. In the 1970s, the real wages even began to decrease.

Statistical data on the changes in the nominal wages in the USA indicate a considerable growth (in current dollars)<sup>5</sup>:

	1965	1979
Gross weekly earnings in the entire US economy	95.5	212.9
Manufacturing industries	107.5	261.6

The dynamics of the real wages present quite a different picture. In 1969, the average weekly wages after taxes were \$104.38, and 11 years later, in 1979, \$101.02. During the same period, corporate taxes fell from 48 to 39 per

<sup>1</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1978, p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, October 1980, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *The American Federationist*, October 1974, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1975, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1979, p. 419.

cent.<sup>1</sup> According to labor unions' computations, real wages began to fall especially fast in the late 1970s. Gus Hall said in his report to the 22nd Convention of the US Communist Party that the "record-making profits cannot be explained by inflation. They are the result of the speed-up and sweat, blood and toil of the workers, and of cuts in real wages... The continuing, absolute decline in real wages is a new phenomenon in our times."<sup>2</sup>

The growth of real wages is way behind that of labor productivity. In 1947 through 1970, the rate of labor productivity in all the branches of the manufacturing industry exceeded the rate of growth of average wages by a factor of 1.7, in chemical industry, by a factor of 2.9, in machine-building—2.1, in instrument engineering—2.2, and in electrical engineering—1.9.

These statistics show that in the leading US industries, the scientific and technological progress is accompanied by a sharp increase in the exploitation of workers. Inflation led to the income of a worker family increasingly falling behind the minimal cost of living budget of this population category computed by the US Department of Labor.

Married women were compelled to take up jobs in production on an increasing scale. In 1965, there were 13.6 million families where two or more members were hired workers. In 1978, there were 27.5 million such families. The wages of married women made up over 30 per cent of family incomes. Three types of family budgets are studied in the USA: "high", "intermediate" and "lower". That is actually an admission of the fact that there are not just three consumption levels in the country but also three socio-economic modes of life.

According to the US Department of Labor, in 1967 the "lower" budget of a family of four amounted to \$5,915 per annum, while 13 years later, in 1979, it grew to \$12,585, i.e., more than twice. In 1981, it grew to \$14,044. The

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, October 1980, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> G. Hall, *Labor Up-Front. In the People's Fight Against the Crisis. Report to the 22nd Convention of the Communist Party USA*, Detroit, Michigan, August 23, 1979, International Publishers, New York, 1979, p. 8.

"intermediate" budget of families, belonging to the main body of specialists and only the smaller section of the working class, also doubled in these years: from \$9,076 to \$20,519<sup>1</sup>; in 1981, it grew to \$24,461. In the early 1970s, the wages of the main bread-winner in a worker family were on an average 28 per cent lower than the sum envisaged by the Department of Labor for a worker family, and at the end of the decade they were 33 per cent below that sum. In 1972, the average wages of fully employed workers were \$3,214 behind the sums required by the budget, according to the Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, while in early 1981 the figure was \$7,633.

There is, of course, a considerable gap in the incomes of different categories of American families depending on the occupational group to which the head of the family belongs. For instance, the incomes of engineers and technicians in 1975 exceeded the estimated average cost of living by 2 per cent. Among skilled workers, there were sections whose real wages were much higher than the average. But on the whole, the incomes of skilled workers were 18 per cent lower, of semi-skilled ones 28 per cent lower, and those employed in service 39 per cent lower.

All this indicates that the earnings of most US workers increasingly fall behind the value of their labor. For instance, auto workers have wages that are 25 to 30 per cent higher than the country's average. But, as *UAW Solidarity* wrote, in 1979, even with all of 52 working weeks a year, their wages were still \$1,360 behind the modest cost of living level. Thus, the assertions that the auto workers were "affluent" was a myth, wrote the magazine.<sup>2</sup>

Under the 1982 collective contract, the auto workers lost their right to increases tied to inflation, their annual paid leave was cut by 6 days, and old-age retirement benefits at employers' expense were slashed. But the worst blow against the workers' interests was the consent of union leaders to reduce the work force at the expense of workers who had less than 10 years seniority.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, May 21, 1980, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, February 13, 1981, pp. 2, 3-5.

AFL-CIO President George Meany, an ardent advocate as he was of American capitalism, was once compelled to state: "Workers these days are feeling a deep sense of frustration. They have been slipping backward... And that is where the average American worker stands today. A long way short of the affluence we have been hearing about. A long way short of what television sponsors represent the American standard of living to be. A long way short of what the government economists say is absolutely needed to live decently."<sup>1</sup> The richest capitalist country where the value of the gross national product has exceeded \$1,000 billion has a growing section of the population living in poverty. According to official statistics, millions of Americans subsist on miserable pittance and scanty food rations doled out by the government. In 1976, 25 million Americans received these rations.

Poverty is a historical category whose specific content varies with national conditions, the development of productive forces, accumulated national wealth, labor productivity, standard of living, etc. Poverty in the USA is real. Sidney Lens, a well-known American unionist and author, says that throughout the 200-year-long history of the USA "wealth and poverty pyramided simultaneously".<sup>2</sup> The high level of production and of national wealth refute the view that poverty in the USA continues to exist because of the economic impossibility to ensure normal conditions of existence for all in American society. As Sidney Lens emphasises, "In truth, they were made or kept poor by the indifference of the men of power—or by their deliberate intent."<sup>3</sup>

Mass poverty in the USA is a consequence of increased exploitation. Along with the aged with low retirement benefits, the main body of poor consists of 85 per cent of Indians and some 30 per cent of Blacks, whose incomes are 30 to 40 per cent lower than those of the whites. In 1976, 15.8 per cent of all American children lived in poverty.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *AFL-CIO News*, September 5, 1970, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lens, *Poverty: America's Enduring Paradox. A History of the Richest Nation's Unwon War*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1971, p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>4</sup> *Economic Notes*, New York, April-May 1979, p. 9.

At the end of the 1970s, about 10 per cent of all the American families of four had incomes lower than the officially recognized poverty level. There were 8.9 per cent of such families among whites, 31.3 per cent among Blacks, and 22.4 per cent among Hispanics.<sup>1</sup> Because of the sharp fall in real wages, in 1980 the number of families below the poverty line increased by another 13 per cent.

The growing inflation, the fall in real wages and increased exploitation destroyed the illusions of a prosperous American economy among the great mass of the working class in the USA. Bourgeois ideologists have to admit that the relatively highly paid workers, those who are included in the "middle class" in bourgeois statistics, who have moved to the suburbs buying houses, cars, furniture and appliances on credit, are living through a revolution of defeated expectations. As American Professor Andrew Levison points out, the blue-collar workers' dream of a "fair deal" has been destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

Profound scepticism and disbelief in the myths implanted by the bourgeois propaganda about the "exceptional" nature of American capitalism are growing among the broad masses of the working class. The view takes root in their consciousness that the growth in public wealth does not lead to an incomes revolution or diminish social inequality.

In an article entitled "Impoverishment in Capitalist Society" Lenin wrote: "The cost of living is rising. Wages, even with the most stubborn and most successful strike movement, are increasing much more slowly than the necessary expenditure of labour power. And side by side with this, the wealth of the capitalists is increasing at a dizzy rate."<sup>3</sup> He especially stressed the factor of growing poverty in the social sense, i.e., in the sense of the disparity between the increasing level of the needs of the whole society and the working masses' standard of living.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Harrington, *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> A. Levison, *The Working-Class Majority*, Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, Inc., New York, 1974, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 435.

<sup>4</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Review. Karl Kautsky. 'Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm. Eine Antikritik'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 201

The present-day experience of the USA is a graphic illustration of the truth of Lenin's conclusion. Growing exploitation, social inequality, impoverishment of millions upon millions and permanent mass unemployment are now engulfing not only the workers but also all other categories of the American working people.

The social contrasts in the country are so great that a growing tendency may be said to exist toward poverty in a social sense, toward further pauperization of certain poorer sections of the population.

### Stabilization of Mass Unemployment

The growing multifaceted crisis of US capitalism and the social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution have made yet another social problem extremely acute, namely, ensuring employment, giving the working person a chance to provide for his or her existence by their labor.

Throughout the post-WW II period there has been a considerable group of wage earners in the USA who were deprived of such a chance. Employers did not at all exert themselves to reduce permanent unemployment to a minimum—for all the profuse declarations to that effect. As early as 1946, Congress passed an Employment Act. The government undertook to provide jobs for all those capable of working and willing to work.

In his 1953 economic report to Congress, President Harry Truman asserted that the Employment Act meant more than providing a chance to work for those willing to do so at that time: "It means full utilization of our national resources, our technology and science, our farms and factories, our business brains and our labor skills... Full employment tomorrow is something different from full employment today. The growth of opportunity, with a growing population and an expanding technology, requires a constantly expanding economy."<sup>1</sup>

Practical experience has shown just how demagogic were these statements by Truman and how contradictory to the harsh reality.

In 1975, the *Time* magazine wrote: "Until recently,

<sup>1</sup> *Employment and Labor-Relations Policy*, p. 4.

economists defined full employment as a 4% rate of joblessness. Lately they have raised that figure to 5%. By that reckoning, the U.S. is now 3.2% away from full employment."<sup>1</sup>

Chronic unemployment grows in connection with the changes in the structure of production in the USA conditioned by the scientific and technological progress. A.H. Raskin wrote in this connection: "Automation is creating a new class of poor... This new class is made up of workers disposed by the machine: their skills, security and status all washed into nothingness by the onsurge of technology."<sup>2</sup> An immediate consequence of that is longer periods of unemployment<sup>3</sup>:

	1965	1977
Per cent without work for		
5-10 weeks	21	22
11-14 weeks	8.2	8.5
over 26 weeks	10.4	14.8

While the overall unemployment level in the second half of the 1970s did not drop lower than 6 to 8 per cent, it often exceeded 20 per cent among young people and even 40 per cent among Black young people who have worse general education and occupational training. American experts also believe that there are 17 million persons in the USA who are not counted as unemployed but would like to have a job. Out of these, 5 million are not actively seeking jobs, 5.4 million continue their studies while waiting for a job, etc. Unemployment, even partial, has an extremely negative effect on the incomes of worker families. For instance, those who spend 1 to 4 weeks out of work lose 21 per cent of their average annual wages, those unemployed during 5 to 14 weeks lose 36.7 per cent, 15 to 20 weeks—55 per cent, and 27 weeks and more—80 per cent of the wages.

US economy is periodically subject to upheavals, which slows down production rates and leads to a growth in mass permanent unemployment. The USA has to a considerable degree lost its superiority over other developed

<sup>1</sup> *Time*, March 17, 1975, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Leader*, New York, March 30, 1964, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1978, p. 408.

capitalist countries in the production of basically new items through reducing production costs.

The US economy is going through an acute structural crisis, and in many respects the technological level of its productive forces cannot compete in the world markets. The monopolies look for a way out in a new reconstruction of the industries, a sharp rise in labor productivity and mass lay-offs of work force.

Apart from the prospect of further growth of the overall number of the unemployed in the USA, the problems of stagnant unemployment and depression areas have become extremely acute. The growth of stagnant unemployment is directly engendered by changes in the structure of production in the USA conditioned by the fast scientific and technological progress.

Under these conditions, losing one's workplace is in most cases not just something accidental but involves a long search for work, the impossibility of getting employment adequate to one's skills, moving on to substantially worse paid jobs, and the need to take occasional short-term employment.

In the USA, the contradiction between "superemployment", i.e., mass overtime work, and permanent unemployment is very acute. That is the nature of capitalism. It was already Karl Marx who observed that "the condemnation of one part of the working-class to enforced idleness by the over-work of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists, and accelerates at the same time the production of the industrial reserve army on a scale corresponding with the advance of social accumulation."<sup>1</sup>

American monopoly capital rejects outright the unions' demands to cut down the work week, viewing it as an attempt to undermine the basis for maintaining the superemployment and the subsistence-level existence of the multi-million army of the unemployed.

During the 1969-1970 crisis, the number of fully unemployed was 5 million (5.9 per cent of the entire work force), and in 1974-1975 10 million, or 9 per cent.<sup>2</sup> By

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 595-96.

<sup>2</sup> *UAW Solidarity*, September 30, 1977, p. 4.

1977, unemployment was somewhat reduced, amounting to 7.6 per cent. In 1981, after the partial reduction of 1978-1979, it again grew to 9 million, and at the beginning of 1982 to 10 million. In the car industry, unemployment went over the 30 per cent mark, according to labor union statistics. It is also growing in the steel, textile, rubber and electrical engineering industries. Besides, there is a considerable section of the population employed on a part-time basis. In 1971, they numbered 10.5 million, in 1977, 14.45 million.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, unemployment practically involves 15 to 20 per cent of workers and their families.

The US ruling circles insist that increased military spending encourages employment. In actual fact, the dollars expended on military needs create significantly fewer jobs than spending on the development of civil industries. The growth of military spending in the mid-1970s deprived about 4 million of their jobs. Harry Maurer's *Oral History of the Unemployed* (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1979) points out that \$1 billion spent on military production creates 75,710 jobs, while the same money would create 100,072 jobs in construction, 138,939 jobs in health care, or 187,299 jobs in education.<sup>2</sup>

Unemployment is not only a personal tragedy for millions of people. It is also an enormous waste of manpower. The country has whole areas of chronic unemployment which emerged, among other reasons, following the relocation of numerous factories and firms from the North of the USA to the South-East, South-West or West in order to escape labor union pressure, high wages and land restrictions. As *Business Week* pointed out, mass lay-offs affected literally all major cities in the industrial areas of the North, including Detroit, Pittsburgh, Akron, Philadelphia and New York. In New York State alone, the number of jobs in industry decreased by 430,000 between 1969 and 1977.<sup>3</sup>

Unemployment increasingly affects those strata of the working class and technicians that were previously be-

<sup>1</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1978, p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, May 21, 1980, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Business Week*, November 14, 1977, p. 144.

lieved to be privileged. In 1969, unemployment among professionals and technicians was 1.3 per cent and in 1974, 2.3 per cent.<sup>1</sup> In 1975, it was 3.6 per cent. About 750,000 graduating from colleges are left without jobs.<sup>2</sup> Peter Leibig, 24, a former literature major who taught for a year at Southern Illinois University, said that he would "take anything that pays more than unemployment compensation"—work in a restaurant, cleaning sewers—"I'd do anything".<sup>3</sup> Many other unemployed engineers and technicians expressed the same readiness. Little changed in the mental workers' employment situation in later years. The *Dissent* magazine wrote: "Here is the major point of crisis and of pain—to invest years in school, with high hopes for a career afterwards, leading, finally, to nothing... If graduation leads, not to a career, but to an abyss into which capped and gowned students are dumped, then here, as C. Wright Mills would say, is the real point of intersection where personal troubles become social issues."<sup>4</sup>

According to *Time*, some persons conceal their level of education and professional training to get a job, thus avoiding the stigma of excessively high qualifications. The magazine cited an example of Marge Johnston, a medical microbiologist for 23 years and unemployed for 17 months, who said: "Nobody is going to hire a microbiologist to drive a bus. But I'm prepared to handle that. On job application forms, I can put down that I'm only a high school graduate. This is called the sin of omission. Everybody does it."<sup>5</sup>

The impassive figures of American statistics conceal the tragedy of an enormous mass of workers deprived of a chance to provide for their families by their labor. Americans joke sadly: "If your neighbor has lost his job, that's recession. If you lose yours, that's depression."

<sup>1</sup> *Manpower Report of the President Including Reports by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Transmitted to the Congress April 1975*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1975, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> *AFL-CIO News*, January 26, 1974, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *The New York Times Magazine*, June 20, 1976, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Dissent*, New York, Winter 1977, p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> *Time*, March 17, 1975, p. 35.

Transnational corporations close down factories and cut production on US territory. That is another cause of mass unemployment becoming permanent. American authors have shown that major corporations close down their factories, including profitable ones, to implement a planned reduction of investments in some industries in order to strengthen their positions in others.

Within 10 years, 165,000 jobs were lost in Philadelphia and 508,000 in the northeastern states (New England) due to unjustified closing down of factories. The closures throughout the country in 1965-1975 resulted in the overall liquidation of 15 million jobs. As a result, the possibilities of employment in many areas of the USA have deteriorated, poverty increased, migration of work force intensified, and the living standards of many worker families dropped. Closing car plants in the USA, automobile corporations build runaway shops in Mexico and other countries. Growing unemployment leads to increased exploitation of the workers that are employed.<sup>1</sup>

The position of the unemployed has in recent years greatly deteriorated because of a sharp increase in military spending and the cutbacks, as part of "austerity measures", in social programs. Besides, the American system of unemployment insurance still has no unified national standards. Each state's administration decides which categories of the unemployed should be paid unemployment relief money and how much. Unemployment insurance programs are mostly short-term and ad hoc. Long-term or permanent unemployment essentially remains outside the framework of these programs. The system of unemployment insurance does not cover all those who need it. It envisages payments by workers into insurance funds and only partially satisfies the needs of those who lose their jobs.

By the beginning of the 1970s, the USA came 20th among 22 capitalist countries as far as social security expenditure was concerned. In the USA it made up 6 per cent of the national income, in West Germany 20.8, and in France 18.9 per cent. American taxpayers have

<sup>1</sup> UAW Solidarity, May 1-15, 1980, p. 10.

to give away more money than they themselves receive in unemployment benefits, pensions, and other kinds of social security. The American system of unemployment insurance includes certain conditions on the availability of benefits, such as, for instance, the arbitrary definition by government officials of the unemployed's ability and willingness to work. In states where the anti-labor "right-to-work" laws are in force, unemployment benefits may be withheld for leaving work "without due cause", for "misbehavior", or participating in strikes. In 1975, more than 12 million employees were not entitled to unemployment insurance in case they lost their jobs.<sup>1</sup>

The intervention of federal authorities in this sphere of the states' activities is extremely limited and is mostly expressed in providing loans when the local insurance funds are exhausted by prolonged and mass unemployment. In 1977, for instance, 21 states requested such aid from the federal authorities.

There is a great deal of cynicism about the assertions by the apologists of capitalism that unemployment is a natural and socially justified means of increasing production efficiency. *The New York Times* wrote that unemployment at a level higher than 5 per cent disciplined those who had a job and provided a good lesson for those who would in future become part of the work force. As before, advocates of monopoly capital insist that unemployment is caused by the working class's "anti-social behavior" and by "union monopoly" in labor markets, with unions allegedly fighting for increased wages without regard for the interests of the whole society.

Employment and unemployment have been high on the list of priorities in the class struggle of the American proletariat in recent years. It includes demands for guaranteed employment, reduction of the work week to 35 hours without loss of pay, more public works to create new jobs, increased government funding of education, wider opportunities for vocational training, and an end to the employers' attempts to use overtime instead of hiring new workers.

<sup>1</sup> *The American Federationist*, September 1975, p. 13.



### The Crisis of the Opportunist Policies of Labor Union Bureaucracy

The struggle between two tendencies in the labor movement, a democratic and an opportunistic one, continues to affect American labor unions and the working class as a whole. The struggle between these two tendencies is one of the basic trends of American history.

The concrete content of that struggle in the 1960s and 1970s was determined by the character of the deteriorating relations between the unions and the ruling circles, the machinery of state-monopoly capitalism. The tendencies in the labor movement and changes occurring in the unions are linked with the entire domestic and foreign policy of American imperialism.

It is essential that the state-monopoly policy toward labor in the USA has an important peculiarity connected with the role which union bureaucracy plays in it. It is with the help of this bureaucracy that the ruling circles of the USA have always tried to separate the American workers from the influence of socialist ideology and restrict class struggle to purely economic demands—and curtailed demands, at that.

Lenin wrote: "Strange as it may seem, in capitalist society even the working class can carry on a bourgeois policy, if it forgets about its emancipatory aims, puts up with wage-slavery and confines itself to seeking alliances now with one bourgeois party, now with another, for the sake of imaginary 'improvements' in its indentured condition."<sup>1</sup> It is this policy that the top union bureaucracy advocates, involving in it the broad masses of the working people as well.

Proclaiming the strategy of "social responsibility", union bureaucracy endeavors to achieve a formal, practically unrealizable equality in the relations between "organized capital" and "organized labor" under the aegis of the state. Union leaders believe that the unions must fight for a "fair deal" for the working class, but at the same time their demands must be "morally justified" and "economically sound", suitable as a basis for establishing "class peace" in the social sphere.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "In America", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, p. 215.

There are several hundred thousand union functionaries in the USA, but only several thousand of these constitute the directive nucleus, the top and intermediate strata of union bureaucracy whose incomes are many times higher than those of the rank and file.

The union bureaucracy's ideological and political support for the capitalist system is closely associated with union business bringing large dividends to the bureaucracy. In 1979, 56 top union officials had annual incomes of more than \$100,000 each. Herbert Hill of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, dealing principally with organized labor, said: "George Meany is not running a labor movement. George Meany and his colleagues are now businessmen engaged in the business of unions."<sup>1</sup>

The great sums accumulated by the unions (pension, strike and other funds) are used by the bureaucrats both for direct investment in businesses and, by the more cynical union hussies, for personal enrichment. "When the friendship between employers and union leaders goes beyond sentiment ... and develops a pecuniary basis, then it would appear to exceed even the official government policy of avoiding industrial 'strife'. This, at least, is how the Senate investigating committees have appeared to look at the matter when evidence of widespread corruption in union-employer dealings has been presented to them."<sup>2</sup>

In 1970, the Teamsters Union earned, on a legal basis, \$144.5 million from investment in securities and various enterprises; the Steelworkers Union \$135.9 million; the Carpenters Union \$41.8 million.<sup>3</sup> Similar examples could be given for other unions as well. Daniel Bell wrote: "The real sickness lies in the decline of unionism as a moral vocation, the fact that so many union leaders have become money-hungry, taking on the grossest features of business society."<sup>4</sup>

Usurping the will of the working masses, union bureaucracy creates a labor market favorable for the employers,

<sup>1</sup> *The Washington Post*, April 9, 1972, p. A1.

<sup>2</sup> *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor*, ed. by Burton Hall, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1972, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, July 5, 1971, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in D.C. Bok and J.T. Dunlop, *Labor and the American Community*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1970, p. 32.



disciplines the labor force and increases its effective exploitation in the process of production. This ideology and this practice are the most important postulates of so-called "pure" or "business unionism", which holds that the higher the employers' profits, the more chances the unions stand of a "fair deal".

The top union leadership relies on an army of thousands of union officials whose incomes are also quite large, between 30 and 50 thousand dollars a year. Their financial incentives and promotion to more lucrative posts are primarily dependent on their loyalty to their bosses.

The implementation of pro-capitalist policies by union bureaucrats is undoubtedly facilitated by the adherence of the US working class to economic struggle and the certain successes it has achieved in it. One must not underestimate the fact, however, that the positions of the union bureaucracy are supported by the entire power structure. Government agencies have legalized a system of power abuse and coercion of the working class. The ruling circles and the union bureaucracy have enforced a joint anti-communist complex of measures which place difficult obstacles in the way of progressive forces in the unions.

Lane Kirkland, the new AFL-CIO president, made no changes in the direction of the activities of the federation. One can even state that the union bureaucracy moved another step to the right. The AFL-CIO supported President Carter's policy of wage restraints. Its support for President Reagan's reactionary domestic and aggressive foreign policy appears even more cynical. Kirkland stated that the best thing would be for the two parties, the Democratic and the Republican, to appeal to the unions and to cooperate with them.

Bourgeois and reformist ideologues believe the American labor unions' emphasis on economic struggle and immediate pragmatic goals to be their specific features. It is also asserted that there are objective premises for the development of the so-called economic unionism, and that there is no prospect for the transformation of the union movement in the USA. In practice, however, the tactics of economic unionism are realized in the process of objective development of irreconcilable class contradictions in production and in the distribution of its material results. The heat of those contradictions in the 1960s and 1970s led to sharp conflicts between labor and

capital, in which union leaders were inevitably involved.

American state-monopoly capitalism runs into increasing difficulties arising from competition in the foreign markets, inflation within the country, the dollar crisis and the budget deficit; it therefore resorts to cutting down the size of the "fair share" of the working class in the distribution of the national product, to replacing the "free" market bargaining between labor and capital by such restrictive measures as wage freezes, controls over wage increases and compulsory arbitration undermining the unions' right to strike.

All of these circumstances laid bare the instability of the policy of "class collaboration", giving rise to new demands and new views in the labor movement itself and stimulating the struggle within it between the progressive and conservative forces. More and more often, narrow professional interests in the struggle with capital give way to problems of overall social and political significance (opposition to increased taxes and inflation, actions for a shorter workday).

The conflicts between labor unions and monopoly capital supported by government bodies have gone beyond the framework of purely economic problems. The union bureaucracy relies on working-class strata that are least developed politically and ideologically, that favor the existing "law and order" within the country and are unwilling to give Afro-Americans and other ethnic minorities the same rights as the whites have. However, the logic of class struggle drives the union bureaucracy, despite its wishes, into opposition to monopoly capital and the government structure when the latter resort to extreme measures in their policy aimed against the labor movement.

Nowadays, even the most ardent advocates of the idea of "pure" and "business unionism" are aware of the real threat to the principle of "free bargaining" between labor unions and capital in the labor markets. Union leaders can no longer call on the labor movement to fight only for a "fair share" in the national product, as that share becomes more and more unattainable. This leads to serious conflicts within the alliance of union bureaucracy and the ruling circles of state-monopoly capitalism.

The leadership of the AFL-CIO and of the major independent unions did their best to attain a compromise with the Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan adminis-

trations, but did not succeed. Neither did their hopes come true that the policy of unconditional support for the military adventures and militarization of the economy would keep alive and consolidate the policy of compromises and maintain stable wage increases.

The results were quite the opposite, and they aggravated contradictions both within the union bureaucracy and between it and the working masses.

The 1960s and 1970s clearly show that the image of the American worker turned bourgeois and integrated in the system does not correspond to reality. The modern stage in the development of the US working class is much more complex than the simplistic one-dimensional picture drawn by bourgeois sociologists in their works.

Under the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution, accompanied, in capitalist society, by an extraordinary growth in the dehumanization of many kinds of labor activity, the shifts in the structure of requirements produce in the working masses a sharp feeling of dissatisfaction with and alienation from their labor. "We can now reject the current stereotype of American workman as a homogeneous population unable to develop class standards," wrote Professor John Leggett of the University of California. "Many of them are militant, and their class views have predictable political consequences."<sup>1</sup>

The most conservative, anti-communist and anti-Soviet circles of the union bureaucracy are now headed by Lane Kirkland, who has never been either a worker or a low-echelon unionist. It was because of his irreproachable loyalty to capitalism that Meany nominated him his assistant and, later, successor.

Walter Reuther was the most prominent follower of the tactics of "social unionism". The Reuther group tried to stimulate union involvement in the country's economic and social life, to expand the unions and establish contacts with other social movements. Its opposition to the policy of aggravating international tension was also a positive feature.

<sup>1</sup> J.C. Leggett, "Sources and Consequences of Working-Class Consciousness", *Blue-Collar World. Studies of the American Worker*, ed. by A.B. Shostak and W. Gomberg, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964, p. 246.

After Reuther's death, this centrist group of union leaders became less active, but it did not cease to exist altogether. In these days, too, a number of high-ranking union leaders like W. Winpisinger, J. Wurf and others, linked with the Social-Democratic left, oppose the most overt manifestations of servility toward capitalism and the aggressive international actions of the ruling circles of the USA. But the centrist group of union leaders is incapable of stepping outside the framework of traditional trade-unionism and of heading the drive for a renovation of the union movement on a truly class basis.

The present crisis of narrow practiciness in American unionism and the tottering of opportunist dogmas concerning the place and role of the unions in the socio-economic system are connected with the deepening general crisis of American capitalism. In view of the economic losses suffered by the working class, falling real wages and growing unemployment accompanied by growing exploitation, the conciliatory policy of union bureaucracy produces acute dissatisfaction among the working masses. The young generation sees the AFL-CIO policy as an embodiment of conservatism and hopelessness.

An important area in the development of modern unionism is the movement of the rank and file.

First, it is a movement of organized workers who have achieved certain economic gains on the basis of collective bargaining, a legal right to strike, and a widely ramified system of arbitration and other committees to settle industrial disputes at the shop level and on to the factory level and all of the corporation's enterprises.

Second, the present-day movement of the labor rank and file is not only, and perhaps not so much, a movement of low-paid groups, although in some industries (or states) these groups do take the lead in the struggle against the union bureaucrats' conciliatory policy. The movement of the rank and file was most active and began earliest in the coal, steel, and automobile industries, where the wages of many union members were much higher than the national average.

Third, that movement emerged from changes in the consciousness of the broad masses, without a strong influence from the outside, from elements of the left. At the same time, that movement reflects the growing alienation of those it engulfs from the capitalist economic and social system, the

workers' dissatisfaction with more than their economic position and working conditions, although these are still a very important stimulating factor in the movement of the rank and file. The qualitative changes in the consciousness of the working masses are most clearly manifested in the fact that they reject more and more often the traditional methods of unions' economic and social activity.

The movement of the rank and file clearly indicates the tendency of new unionism, the unionism of class action,—not just by individual unions but involving the union movement as a whole.

It would be an exaggeration to believe that the positions of the opportunist union bureaucracy have been effectively undermined. Relying on state support and playing on the political backwardness and inertia of part of the membership and their chauvinistic attitudes, the AFL-CIO conservative leadership continues to render US imperialism considerable assistance.

Although there is a marked progressive tendency in the development of the American mass labor movement, it should be taken into account that at present it is merely in the initial stages of its development: quantitative changes are primarily accumulated, and new organization forms of movement are worked out at this preliminary stage. The influence of the ideology that has long dominated trade unions is very strong. The changes, however, are the first shoots of the new and are thus of great theoretical and political interest, since they embody in embryo form the foundations of subsequent development.

Combined with the other objective economic and sociopolitical factors of growing contradictions in American society, that tendency creates the prospect of breakdown of the foundations of the bourgeois labor policy and of overcoming the vicious alliance between the labor union bureaucracy and the US ruling circles. On the international plane, the present stage of the internal struggle in the mass labor movement of the USA is conducive to the involvement of the broad masses of the working class in an active struggle for an irreversible policy of international détente.

### CHAPTER III

## TENDENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRIKE MOVEMENT

### The Restructuring of the Mechanism of the Proletariat's Economic Struggle

The second half of the 1960s and the 1970s are an important stage in the class struggle of the American proletariat. Runaway inflation, a slowing down of the growth rate of real wages followed by their decrease, permanent mass unemployment, and a wide-scale offensive of the monopolies against the working people's rights were the principal factors in the expanding confrontation between labor and capital. Strikes are the main form of the American workers' resistance to capitalist exploitation.

A rise in the strike movement began in the mid-1960s: 1965 through 1971 were the years of its high-growth rate in both absolute and relative terms. Later, strike struggle continued to be tense and massive, as shown by the strike movement statistics<sup>1</sup> (see Table 3).

Industrial conflicts developed against a background of an economic boom and reached a climax in 1970, a year of crisis, when the number of stoppages exceeded the 1946 level, the highest in the whole of the post-WW II period. In 1970, the number of workers involved in strikes was greater than in any postwar year except 1946 and 1952, and only in 1946 and 1959 was the number of man-days idle greater.<sup>2</sup> The bourgeois press wrote of "the worst epidemic of strikes since just after World War II".<sup>3</sup> For the first time the

<sup>1</sup> *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1980*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1982, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1975*, Washington, 1977, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Time*, November 9, 1970, p. 75.

Table 3

Year	Work stoppages		Workers involved		Stoppage, man-days	
	total	average length (days)	total	per cent of employed*	total	per striker
1965	3,963	25.0	1,550	2.5	23,300	15.1
1966	4,405	22.2	1,960	3.0	25,400	12.9
1967	4,595	22.8	2,870	4.3	42,100	14.7
1968	5,045	24.5	2,649	3.8	49,018	18.5
1969	5,700	22.5	2,481	3.5	42,869	17.3
1970	5,716	25.0	3,305	4.7	66,414	20.1
1971	5,138	27.0	3,280	4.5	47,589	14.5
1972	5,010	24.0	1,714	2.3	27,066	15.8
1973	5,353	24.0	2,251	2.9	27,948	12.4
1974	6,074	27.1	2,778	3.5	47,991	17.3
1975	5,031	26.8	1,746	2.2	31,237	17.9
1976	5,648	28.0	2,420	3.0	37,859	15.6
1977	5,506	29.3	2,040	2.4	35,822	17.6
1978	4,230	33.2	1,623	1.9	36,922	22.8
1979	4,827	32.1	1,727	1.9	34,754	20.1
1980	3,885	35.4	1,366	1.5	33,289	24.4

\* Hired workers that do not participate in strikes, as a rule, were not included among the total of employees. The reference here is to the middle and higher echelons of corporate administrative personnel, holders of elective posts in the municipal bodies, domestic servants, and some other categories.

phenomenon of stagflation (a combination of stagnation or even recession with inflation) became apparent. A high level of unemployment no longer resulted in a noticeable drop in strike activity as had been the case in the previous years.

The anti-strike measures of the Nixon administration in 1971-1973 contributed to a falling off of strikes. The lifting of government control over wage increases in April 1974 again triggered off a great rise in their number. The unions stepped up their efforts to gain compensation for the wage losses sustained by organized workers in the previous years. In 1974, the number of strikes reached a record level in US history. A certain drop in strike activity in the subsequent years is explained by the unfavorable effect of the 1974-

1975 economic crisis, the most acute since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In the number of strikes and strikers and the scope of the stoppages throughout the country, the period in question was unparalleled in the past 30 years<sup>1</sup>:

	Average annual number	
	1950-1964	1965-1978
Work stoppages	3,987.1	5007.8
Workers involved (in thousands)	1,904.0	2235.0
Man-days idle (in millions)	29	38

For comparison, let us point out that in 1946-1949 the average annual number of stoppages was 3,925.8, workers involved—2,940,000, with 58.8 million man-days idle.

The scale of the strike movement is most significantly indicated by the number of strikers, which characteristically increases with the growth of the army of hired workers. One must also take into account some relative indices which mainly point to the extent of the workers' involvement in the strike movement—the percentage of strikers among the total work force.

In the manufacturing industry, the annual average number of strikers dropped from 1,370,000 in the 1950s to 946,400 in the 1960s and 822,000 in the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, there was an increase in the share of strikers in other industries in the 1970s compared to the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> The substantial decrease in the number of strikers in some branches of material production is of fundamental importance for evaluating the structural, qualitative changes in the US strike movement.

The situation is explained by various objective and subjective factors, both long-term and short-term in nature. The scientific and technological revolution brought about a rapid increase in the share of the scientific and technical personnel. That was especially characteristic of manufactur-

<sup>1</sup> Computed from *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1978*, Washington, 1980, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Computed from *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1970-1979*.

<sup>3</sup> *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1977*, Washington, 1979, pp. 69-74; *Monthly Labor Review*, July 1979, p. 61.

ing industries, where the share of professional and technical employees, together with the managerial and administrative personnel, was, in 1976, 28.1 per cent of all those employed (18.5 per cent in 1950). This category of hired workers takes a very insignificant part in the strikes. According to the US Department of Labor, in the 1970s there was an annual average of 9 strikes in the manufacturing industry, in which engineers and technicians participated, and the annual average number of workers involved in these strikes was not more than 1,100.<sup>1</sup>

The involvement of white-collar workers—engineers, technicians, etc.—in the strike movement is curbed by many significant differences in their position from that of the main body of workers (higher pay, better working conditions, career opportunity, etc.). One should also consider the corporative psychology characteristic of many technicians and consciously inculcated by the monopolies, feeling of isolation from the rest of hired workers occupying lower rungs in the production hierarchy. Corporations often use administrative and technical personnel working at automated factories as strikebreakers. During a strike, production here can be maintained for a long time at a stable level by a skeleton staff controlling the main elements of the production process.

Such anti-strike strategy creates certain difficulties, often serious ones, for strike action not only in the manufacturing industries, such as chemical and petroleum refining, but also in energy supply, gas industry, telephone communications, etc. The organized workers' resolve to fight for their rights and interests did not abate, but the struggle became more acute and long-drawn-out, the arsenal of weapons used in the struggle more extensive, and more active support from other sections of the working people became necessary. The unions now face the challenge of working out a new strategy and tactics capable of counteracting the advantages which the scientific and technological progress brought to the employers. As the experience of the 1960s and 1970s indicates, accelerated development of automation and the latest technology do not diminish the effectiveness of strikes,

<sup>1</sup> Computed from *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1970-1979*.

contrary to what bourgeois sociologists predicted. But the difficulties and problems brought about by the scientific and technological revolution do exist. Under these conditions, of exceptional significance is the strengthening of the unity and solidarity of the working class and organization of joint actions by the working people against increasing capitalist exploitation.

The unions and the labor movement as a whole face serious difficulties in connection with the decreasing share of workers and the growing share of technical, administrative and managerial personnel in the technologically advanced industries. In the metallurgical and transport engineering industries, for instance, there is permanent structural unemployment directly linked with the scientific and technological advances and with the considerable underloading of production capacities due to an increasingly acute competition between imperialist powers in world markets and declining American exports. Thus, the number of workers directly employed in production in the steel industry fell from 546,000 to 362,000 between 1955 and 1979, while steel production grew from 117 million tons to 140 million tons.<sup>1</sup>

In this situation, the scope of the strike movement was reduced. Acting in the spirit of the traditional principles of "business unionism", the leadership of the United Steelworkers gave up, after 1959, the practice of industry-wide strikes, and began cooperating with the corporations in increasing productivity, explaining this by the need to fight foreign competition. The conciliatory tactics of the leaders of that union found expression in the so-called Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA), in essence an anti-strike pact signed by the United Steelworkers and the steel companies in 1973.<sup>2</sup>

In the final analysis, that policy helped intensified exploitation of the work force, increased rate of industrial accidents, and further reduction in the number of jobs as a result of introduction of new technology and streamlining. Unemployment in that industry did not abate; on the contrary, mass lay-offs continued. In the 7 years follow-

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, October 31, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> G. Hall, *Basics. For Peace, Democracy and Social Progress*, International Publishers, New York, 1980, pp. 157, 205.

ing the signing of the ENA, 80,000 steelworkers lost their jobs.<sup>1</sup>

The agreement was a new step in the conciliatory relations of the union leaders with employers and the government during the implementation of Richard Nixon's "new economic policy". The top AFL-CIO leaders approved of the ENA in the steel industry. George Meany hailed the "no-strike" procedure as "an excellent example of sound collective bargaining and labor-management statesmanship", as a model for preventing workers from participating in strikes.<sup>2</sup>

The ratio of strikers to those employed cannot serve as a substantiation of the claim, frequently made by the bourgeois propaganda, that the proletariat's class activity is falling. That assumption is refuted by the steady growth in the intensity of strikes and the determination of strikers, which we shall later discuss. A reduction in the share of strikers should not be interpreted as a restriction of the sphere of class conflict and expansion of compromise in labor relations.

Changes in worker involvement in strikes are primarily rooted in the deep restructuring of the entire mechanism of the proletariat's economic struggle, in the transition from the extensive to the intensive methods of struggle. Their role and effectiveness under the modern scientific and technological revolution is growing considerably. These shifts and tendencies are not yet fully explicit. The arsenal of new means and methods is still in the process of evolution, but in some spheres and branches of production clear-cut outlines of changes have become apparent, and the manufacturing industries are the most characteristic in this respect.

The point is that under the modern conditions the effectiveness of strikes is clearly growing. The bourgeois state system favors the monopolies. Official propaganda accuses the strikers of increasing the country's economic difficulties through their actions. Organized workers are compelled to improve the tactics and methods of strike

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, November 5, 1981, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> I.W. Abel, *Collective Bargaining. Labor Relations in Steel: Then and Now*, Columbia University Press, New York-Guildford, Surrey, 1976, p. 61.

struggle, defining more precisely the time, the goals and the possible effect of each strike.

Increasing interconnections between the various links in the chain of production due to the advances of the scientific and technological revolution lend strikes a clear national significance: a stoppage at an important branch of the manufacturing industry inevitably causes a chain reaction throughout the national economy. The very possibility of such a situation makes the monopolies act in a more conciliatory spirit.

The results achieved by workers of one of the firms in their negotiations with the management under strike conditions or merely under threat of a strike serve as a kind of reference point in concluding collective agreements at other factories of the same branch. Not infrequently, their owners accept the workers' conditions without a fight. That is particularly characteristic of the metallurgical, automobile, electric, rubber and other manufacturing industries.

Collective bargaining often becomes acute and tense, mostly because of the threat of strike action. Statistics cited by William Winpisinger, General Vice President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO, are very significant in this respect. The union concluded some 3 thousand contracts annually, about 250 a month on average. As a rule, in 100 instances out of 250, the locals informed the union leadership that strike action was not ruled out, requesting official sanctioning for their decision. But the average monthly number of strikes did not exceed 13. In 1968, when the machinists' strike activity became higher than usual, the union headquarters received monthly 120 such requests, while the number of strikes rose to 25. "More significant than the low number of strikes," said Winpisinger, "is the fact that our members request the strike sanction 10 times more often than they use it. This indicates that workers believe they can bargain more effectively if they've got a stick in the closet."<sup>1</sup>

The threat of strike, the manifest readiness to call it, was a very frequent occurrence in the 1970s. In Gil Green's

<sup>1</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1973, p. 58.



words, "the ability of workers to halt production is what gives them bargaining muscle. This capability should always be in evidence. If it is signed away and the company given the feeling that it no longer is to be feared, the union becomes like Samson with his hair shorn."<sup>1</sup> A classic example of this sort of "signing away" is the signing of the ENA in the steel industry discussed above.

A feature of the 1970s was considerable diversity of the methods of strike action. The workers achieved an acceptance of their demands not only through prolonged work stoppages but also through resorting to well-calculated short strikes at the most sensitive areas of the production process.

More and more often, devices and instruments of struggle are used that are borrowed from the experiences of workers of other countries, like selective ("chessboard") and recurrent short work stoppages at various production areas and shops of a factory.<sup>2</sup> Such a series of short work stoppages was conducted by the United Auto Workers in 1976 at 16 General Motors plants. Previously, the auto workers had used the same tactics against the same corporation in October, November and December of 1972, when work successively stopped in 10 plants.

*Monthly Labor Review* of the US Department of Labor summed up: "The UAW had adopted the 'mini-strike' strategy following a nearly 6-month strike over similar issues at GM's Norwood, Ohio, plant... The short-strike strategy was selected because brief stoppages disrupt production but do not deplete the union's strike fund or workers' resources."<sup>3</sup> The brief work stoppages make it difficult for the employers to use strikebreakers.

Highly popular among strikers are also such forms as "work to rule" and slowdowns. They are an effective way of fighting the modern methods of capitalist exploitation, intensification of labor and the more sophisticated forms of the sweating system in production. Widespread slowdowns

<sup>1</sup> G. Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Auto Work and Its Discontents*, ed. by B.J. Widick, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1976, p. 92; J. Brecher & T. Costello, *Common Sense for Hard Times*, Two Continents Institute for Policy Studies, New York, 1976, pp. 63-65.

<sup>3</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, February 1973, pp. 66-67.

obviously lead to a certain reduction of the share of "classical" strike action, particularly in cases where the latter is difficult to implement.

The US Department of Labor does not regard such actions as strikes and they are therefore not included in the statistics. Only those actions are recorded where 6 or more persons stop work completely, which entails the loss of not less than one work shift or one workday. Thus, the official statistics deviate from the real picture of the strike movement, as they do not reflect the shifts in the tactics of the strike movement.

Old tactics are tested under the new conditions and new tactics are worked out. Since the end of the 1960s, boycott of the ready product assumes ever greater significance as a means of class struggle; this measure is intended to disrupt the sale of the product and weaken the company's ability for resistance. As a rule, the boycott is carried out in the form of actions against shops selling the product that is boycotted (picketing, distribution of leaflets calling on wholesale consumers and the public not to buy the commodities or services of the given company, etc.).

The tactics of boycott disrupting the process of circulation, combined with work stoppages paralyzing production, proved to be effective. They were successfully used by workers in electrical engineering in the fall of 1969, by workers of 10 Farah sewing factories in the states of Texas and New Mexico in 1972, by the miners of Kentucky in 1973. The victory of the striking workers of the Big Four rubber companies in 1976 was greatly aided by the international boycott of these multinationals' products declared by the International Confederation of Chemical Industry Workers. The boycott campaign in support of agricultural workers became a very hard fight unparalleled in duration or scope.

In 1977, 7 national campaigns were mounted to boycott the products of corporations that kept unions out of their factories. The J. R. Stevens textile workers fought for many years for the right to organize and for collective bargaining. On November 30, 1978, a J. P. Stevens Worker Support Day was held at the initiative of the unions in 95 cities and towns of the USA and Canada, with mass rallies and demonstrations staged in support of the textile workers'



demands. This became a striking proof of the growing solidarity of the American working people.<sup>1</sup>

Along with other mass solidarity actions, national boycott campaigns are evidence of the growing scope of the class confrontation between labor and capital. The struggle of the broad masses of the US working people increasingly becomes anti-monopoly in character.

In the 1970s, the strike movement, remaining the principal direction of the proletariat's class struggle, was significantly complemented and strengthened by mass democratic movements. There was a growing solidarity between strikers and the broadest strata of the working people involved in other social protest movements.

Under the conditions of mass unemployment, growing inflation and increased government intervention in industrial conflicts on the side of the monopolies, the unions saw ever more clearly the need for greater use of political methods in defending their economic and social demands. Rallies, demonstrations, protest marches held in various cities and in the country's capital indicated growing politicization of the economic struggle.

During these actions, the working people addressed their demands directly to the government. They called for measures to ensure employment, including considerable expansion of the public works program, federal aid to big cities, cuts in military spending, establishment of an adequate system of health services and reduction of the tax burden.

In the 1970s, the conflict between labor and capital became increasingly a political issue, one in the realm of federal legislative regulation. The fierce confrontations between the unions and the monopolies in the second half of the 1970s involved the issues of greater rights for the unions in their organizing effort, the right to picket at construction sites, and raising the federal minimum of wage rates.

The Solidarity Day demonstration in Washington on September 19, 1981 involved half a million participants. More than 200 union and public organizations took part in the march, including the AFL-CIO. That was an immense

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, December 2, 1978, pp. 1, 5; *AFL-CIO News*, December 9, 1978, pp. 1-2.

manifestation of protest against the Reagan administration's anti-union and anti-popular policy, against the unrestrained escalation of the arms race and the cutbacks in social programs which it entails. The marchers carried posters demanding economic and social justice: "Money for Jobs, Not for War", "Jobs Not Bombs".<sup>1</sup> As *Boston Globe* wrote, the events of that day were more than a demonstration. That political protest stressed the growing gap between the union membership and the Reagan administration; it was public condemnation of the President's economic and foreign policy.

The September 19 demonstration showed once again that in the acute class conflict of the proletariat and the monopolies, the economic struggle increasingly develops into actions against the whole system of state-monopoly domination.

### **The Growing Role of Large-Scale Action. Expansion of the Social Basis of Strike Action**

The relative reduction in the number of strikers in certain areas of production is closely linked with a growing intensity of the struggle and at the same time in the role of each of the large-scale actions, the mass strikes of great duration. The average strike duration shows a tendency toward steady growth: it was 20 days in the 1950s, 23.4 in the 1960s, and 27.6 in the 1970s. Besides, in the 1970s, the annual average of days idle per striker was greater than in the previous decades.

Simultaneously, there was a growth in the number of large-scale strikes involving more than 10,000 persons. In the period under consideration, the average annual share of the workers involved exceeded the 1950s and 1960s indices, rising to 35 per cent of the total number of strikers. The growing scale of the strikes reflects the continuing process of production concentration in the USA. The merger boom of the 1960s and 1970s, and especially the formation of conglomerates, accelerated the centralisation of capital, increasing the number of giant enterprises.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, September 22, 1981, pp. 2, 3, 12; *Political Affairs*, October 1981, pp. 16-19.

The acuteness of the industrial conflicts is also shown by the dynamics of the annual average indices of strikes lasting 30 days and more. Comparison of strikes in the 1950s and 1970s shows that there were 819 and 1,482 such strikes respectively, their share in the total number of strikes 19.4 and 28.3 per cent respectively, the share of their participants in the total number of strikers 27.7 and 30.6 per cent, and the share of man-days idle in the total time lost in strikes was 70.4 and 76.4 per cent. The same tendency is obvious in strikes lasting 90 days and more.<sup>1</sup>

In the intense strike struggle, the workers are opposed by a powerful and strong enemy, the giant corporations setting up a united anti-union front. Since the end of the 1960s, there has been a rapid growth in the number of agreements concluded by the employers on "financial assistance", envisaging the establishment of mutual funds to fight strikes. On the other hand, the unions themselves had never fought the monopolies in the post-WW II years on such a large scale, throwing into battle large masses of united forces, as in the 1970s. Their consolidation in the face of growing aggressiveness of the corporations manifested itself, in the first place, in coalition committees of several unions. By 1974, 77 committees were set up for coordinating union action during collective bargaining with conglomerates.<sup>2</sup>

Attacks by the monopolies particularly increased in the economic stagnation period in the second half of the 1970s, in a situation where class contradictions became more acute and the working masses more active. The desire to find a way out of the economic difficulties at the expense of the workers led the monopolies to take more intransigent positions in the collective bargaining. Millions of workers are directly affected by the consequences of the unprecedented offensive of big business on the living standards and union rights. That naturally leads to a growing confrontation between labor and capital.

Workers in large industries are traditionally in the vanguard of the strike struggle. Here the confrontation between

<sup>1</sup> Computed from *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1950-1979*.

<sup>2</sup> *Industrial Relations*, Berkeley, February 1976, p. 83.

labor and capital erupted in numerous large and protracted strikes, some of which will be discussed below.

In the car industry, strikes broke out time and again. Thus, in 1967 there was a 49-day-long strike of 150,000 Ford Motor workers. One of the memorable events of the 1970s and a landmark in US history was the 67-day-long strike of 350,000 workers at General Motors. It began on September 15, 1970 and was the first national strike action at the plants of the largest automobile firm of the capitalist world after the 113-day struggle the General Motors workers had waged in 1945-1946. The auto workers fought tenaciously, and the corporation had to make concessions, granting, among others, two principal demands of the union—to include in the collective settlement an "escalator clause" and to improve the retirement benefits.

A characteristic trait of the strike was its objectively anti-war orientation, since it threatened the realization of the plan of military deliveries to the Pentagon during the escalation of US aggressive actions in Vietnam. Speaking at a rally of General Motors strikers in Pontiac, Emil Mazey, UAW secretary-treasurer, said: "This strike in GM was caused by the war in Vietnam, which brought on inflation. If you want a quick end to the GM strike, work to end the war in Vietnam".<sup>1</sup> The success of the union, which broke the resistance of the leader of the Big Three auto corporations, compelled Ford Motor and Chrysler, also threatened by a strike, to sign a new settlement on the same conditions as General Motors.

An important event was the strike of 117,000 Chrysler workers in the fall of 1973. It was called at the initiative of the rank and file despite the decision of the union president Leonard Woodcock not to resort to strike action during collective bargaining. Apart from increases in wages and retirement benefits, the strikers achieved a reduction in the working hours and inclusion in the collective agreement of a clause providing for stricter union control over observance of the agreement terms.

In 1976, 170 thousand Ford Motor workers also put up a stiff fight during a 28-day-long strike that took place at a

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, October 15, 1970, p. 3.

time when the monopolies sharply intensified their anti-labor policies; it ended in a partial success for the strikers.

In the aviation and aerospace industries, particularly prominent were the strike of 40 thousand Lockheed and Boeing workers late in 1977, and the action by 8 thousand McDonnell Douglas workers in 1978, which lasted more than 2 months. In both cases the strikers got the wage increases for which they fought.

In electrical engineering, the strength of workers' class solidarity was demonstrated by the success of a 102-day-long strike by 150,000 General Electric employees (end of 1969-beginning of 1970). Overcoming their past differences, 13 unions joined forces in collective bargaining and in directing the strike. It was for the first time that they achieved the signing of a single collective agreement covering them all and they were the first in the USA to insist on including an escalator clause in the provisions concerning the wages. The important victory gained by the union coalition over the supercorporation found a great response throughout the country. The unions acted jointly in this industry also in 1976 and 1979, when 37 thousand Westinghouse Electric workers went on strike.

In the rubber industry, the 147-day-long strike, the longest in the industry's history, was mounted in 1976 by 65 thousand workers simultaneously against the 4 largest companies: Goodyear, Firestone Tire and Rubber, Goodrich and Uniroyal, Inc.; there was also a 43-day-long strike at the factories of the latter company in 1979.

In other industries, we should mention the strikes by 60,000 workers in oil refining in 1969 and 1980, the 172-day-long strike by 35,000 workers at the International Harvester agricultural implements factories in 1979 and 1980, and the national strike of 110,000 sewing workers in 1974 (the first since 1921).

There were also 2 major strikes by the newspaper and printers' unions in New York—a 140-day-long in 1966 and an 88-day one in 1978. The latter placed strong emphasis on such a very important demand as the guarantees for organized workers' right to their workplace, which is extremely vital in view of expanding capitalist rationalization and the accelerating scientific and technological revolution. Coordinated action by labor unions embracing the workers of

the country's 3 leading papers made the owners give in and conclude collective agreements guaranteeing the right to full employment for all union members.

As for the other sections of the working class, miners' actions should be mentioned above all. The absence of major strikes in the coal industry between 1951 and 1965 was often used by the ideologues of class collaboration as an argument in favor of alleged "era of industrial peace". The rise in the miners' strike actions that began in the late 1960s completely refuted those predictions. In 1976, the share of miners among all strikers was 21.3 per cent, although the share of miners in the total work force did not exceed 1 per cent.

The miners' actions of the 1970s began with a strike at the Brookside mine (Harlan County, Kentucky), which lasted 13 months and ended in a victory for the miners. The strike was sparked off by the refusal of the Duke Power Company to recognize the miners' union and became the focal event in the miners' struggle in 1973 and 1974. The company's armed guards fired on pickets and miners' homes, the police beat up the strikers and even arrested women and children from the strikers' families. One striker died from injuries. The miners showed great courage and solidarity, and that, along with a national solidarity campaign of mass pickets, rallies and demonstrations, ensured the victory of the strike.

One of the most militant, massive and protracted actions in the history of the American labor movement was the 110-day-long national strike by 160,000 miners (December 1977-March 1978). During the strike, President Carter announced his intention to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act to make the miners return to work. But that threat did not break the miners' will. The mining corporations and the government were confronted by the national solidarity of the working people. More than 250 unions formed a coalition to render moral and financial support to the strikers. And they won tangible gains by that strike—an increase in wages and pensions.

On March 9 and 10, 1981, a 2-day strike against the Reagan administration's intention to cut by 88 per cent the fund of federal welfare to the victims of silicosis, miners' occupational disease, was held by 150,000 miners at their union's call. Simultaneously, an impressive demonstration of thousands of miners who came from West Virginia,

Pennsylvania and other states was held in the capital. As subsequent events showed, the miners' action against the Republican administration's policy of scrapping or sharply reducing many social programs was the first indication of a growing protest movement of the working people.

The miners' national strike from March through June 1981, which lasted 73 days and was the sixth since 1966, showed the miners' strong spirit and readiness to fight for their rights and interests. During the strike, the miners succeeded in rebuffing the frontal assault of the energy and financial corporations controlling coal-mining, and in defending their gains in wages, retirement benefits, labor protection and union rights. The employers had to make concessions, in the first place in wages, pensions, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Strike actions in transport and communications were marked by high intensity. Their development went ahead the growth of the number of hired workers. In the period considered here, these industries became the scene of acute class conflicts.

Railworkers held national strikes in 1967 and 1970 in which 137,000 and 300,000 were involved; in 1971, there was an 18-day strike by 125,000 workers on 10 railroads. In September 1978, a national strike of 330,000 employees of 139 railroads was called which paralysed practically all freight and passenger transportation in the country. The government invoked anti-labor legislation to announce a 60-day strike moratorium. Still, railwaymen gained a number of important concessions from the monopolies.

In 1967, the lockout of 250,000 truck drivers caused a general strike of 550,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In April and May 1970, 80,000 truck drivers struck. A national 44-hour strike of 400,000 teamsters took place in 1976; as a result of it, the volume of trucking on the country's roads fell by nearly half. Mention must also be made of strikes by 100,000 independent truck drivers in 1974 and 1979.

The sea transport and the country's ports were also affected by strikes. These included a 78-day-long strike in the Atlantic coast merchant navy in 1965, a strike by 60,000

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, August 1981, pp. 27-28.

longshoremen in Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico ports in January and February of 1965 lasting 55 days, a strike by 75,000 longshoremen in these ports in 1969 and 1970 lasting 101 days, a 46-day-long stoppage involving 35,000 participants in the same ports in 1977, and a 134-day-long strike by West Coast longshoremen in 1971-1972 (the longest strike by longshoremen in US history). Despite the interference of the government which invoked the Taft-Hartley Act, the strikers fought till their demands were satisfied by the management.

In 1966, the largest strike in the history of US civil aviation was called by the union of aircraft mechanics, involving 35,000 participants and lasting 43 days. A 108-day-long strike by 1,500 pilots and crew of the Northwest Airlines paralyzed in 1978 a large number of domestic and international flights. In 1979, 19,000 aircraft mechanics of the United Airlines company struck, and in 1980, 9,000 technicians of a major American company, Pan American, called a strike which stopped dozens of international and domestic flights of that company.

In 1968, 250,000 union members in American Telephone and Telegraph went on strike, and 500,000 stopped work for 6 days in 1971 in a conflict with the same corporation.

That is by no means a full list of major strikes in the major branches of the economy—manufacturing, mining, construction, transport and communications. The industrial proletariat remains the main initiator and participant in strikes. Its position and struggle decisively affect the character of the whole American labor movement.

The class relations in the non-productive sphere (trade, service, financial and state establishments) are characterized by a progressive growth in the strike struggle and a rapid increase in its absolute indices (the number of strikes, the number of strikers and man-days idle), which on the whole reflects the high growth rate in the overall number of those employed in this sphere. This creates the conditions for the development of concerted actions by all sections of the American proletariat, by all who sell their labor.

Municipal, state and federal employees are involved in union organizing and strike movement on an ever increasing scale, which extends the social basis of the movement. This category represents the fastest growing sector of hired

workers. Since 1950 through 3 decades its numbers grew more than 2.5-fold, reaching 15.9 million in 1979, i.e., 20 per cent of all those employed in the American economy.<sup>1</sup> Over 80 per cent of the body of municipal, state and federal employees belong to the category of working people: their social and occupational status is no different from similar categories of workers and employees in the private sector. These are teachers, postal workers, employees at medical and sanitary establishments, etc. Deteriorating living standards have led ever greater masses of public workers to proletarian means of struggle—union organization and strikes. In 1962, the federal government had to recognize the federal employees' unions in a presidential decree No. 10998 and to give them the right to collective bargaining, on one condition—no strikes. Subsequently, similar decisions were taken by a number of states and municipal bodies.

At present, the public workers' right to organization is recognized everywhere. That circumstance has stimulated the growth of their unions. However, only in 35 states the right to collective bargaining has so far been confirmed by legislation; in 3, it was established by court rulings or decisions of the authorities. Only in 9 states the increased strike actions of 1967-1978 resulted in laws stipulating the state employees' right to strike and, besides, that right is given only some categories of employees and is in all cases hedged with various restrictions. In those states where strikes are forbidden, industrial conflicts must be solved by "peaceful means"—through compulsory arbitration, mediation and other measures ruling out work stoppages.

Article 303 of the Taft-Hartley Act banning strikes by federal employees is fully in force, as is the anti-strike statute of 1955 in accordance with which participation of this category of employees in strikes is treated as a criminal offense and entails dismissal, fine, or a prison sentence. All of this determines the distinction of the legal status of federal employees as compared with those employed in the private sector. All the more impressive is the scale of their participation in the union and strike movement.

<sup>1</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, January 1981, p. 77.

The growth of organization of the public workers was considerably faster than the growth in employment. In 1956-1976, the numbers of organized employees grew 5-fold, reaching 5.8 million in the second half of the 1970, i.e., involving nearly 40 per cent of the total.<sup>1</sup> Organizations of public workers resolutely resort to the usual union tactics in fighting for better working conditions for their members. In the 1960s, the position of never resorting to stoppages was revised, and the earlier adopted no-strike clauses were struck out of the statutes. These organizations included the American Teachers' Federation, the National Education Association, the Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Association of Registered Nurses, the Federation of Government Employees, the International Firemen's Association, and unions of postal workers.

At the end of 1965 and the beginning of 1966, an unprecedented growth of strikes of public employees began, as shown by the annual average statistics<sup>2</sup> (see Table 4).

Table 4

Years	Strikes	Strikers (in thousands)	Man-days idle (in millions)
1950-1959	25.0	3.4	0.02
1960-1964	32.4	18.7	0.05
1965-1969	206.0	122.2	1.03
1970-1974	377.8	197.0	1.6
1975-1979	468.6	223.4	2.1

As the *New Program of the Communist Party USA* pointed out, "strike struggles have spread among government employees, in the face of legal restraints and threats of arrest and imprisonment".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United States, 1965*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1966, p. 55; *Directory of National Unions and Employee Associations, 1977*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1979, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Computed from *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1975-1979*.

<sup>3</sup> *New Program of the Communist Party U.S.A.*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1970, p. 45.

In 1965-1979, the number of strikes in the public sector increased 12-fold compared with 1950-1964, and there were 21 times as many strikers and more than 53 times as many man-days idle.<sup>1</sup> The immediate cause of discontent in the 1960s was mostly low wages lagging behind pay in the private sector. The growing acuteness of class conflicts in the 1970s was also due to the growing number of dismissals. In 1974-1975, when an economic crisis broke out aggravating the urban crisis, it became quite clear that the guarantee of employment, thought to be an advantage of public service, was only an illusion.

In 1978, *U.S. News & World Report* observed that, "despite no-strike laws, at least 70,000 public workers now strike each year in July, August and September".<sup>2</sup> At this time, when a new budget is approved and the whole scale of government employees' wages is revised, American cities become the scene of fierce conflicts. Teachers, municipal, health service and city transport workers, garbage collectors and firemen go on strike. A typical action of this kind was a strike for higher wages by 24,000 municipal employees in the state of Wisconsin in July 1977.

According to Labor Department statistics, about a third of all strikes and strikers in the public sector involve teachers of elementary and high schools. They are compelled to wage a continual struggle for better working conditions and wages. A characteristic feature of the strike movement of teachers is the tendency toward overcoming the racial disunity and achieving greater unity with the proletariat. Many of their actions are on a mass scale, with the strikers showing great staunchness. Thus, in September 1975, more than 100,000 teachers in 15 states went on strike. In New York City, the number of strikers reached 60,000 in that year. Chicago teachers' strikes were very well organized, with 26,000 school teachers taking part in strikes in 1973, 1975 and 1980. In September and October 1981, 20,000 high school teachers and employees fought a hard fight in Philadelphia. The strikers

<sup>1</sup> Computed from *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1975-1979*.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, August 7, 1978, p. 65.

were not intimidated by mass arrests and the threat of large fines.<sup>1</sup>

Members of such a numerous and important group in the public sector as the medical workers of municipal and private non-profit city-financed medical establishments showed great activity.<sup>2</sup>

Analysis of the actions by hired workers in various branches of the economy, in the service sphere and the public sector thus provides evidence of an expansion of the basis of strikes and growing acuteness of the class struggle in the country.

### The Main Directions and Results of the Workers' Effort in Collective Bargaining

Despite the changes that are taking place in the strike movement, it remains predominantly economic in character. The Communist Party USA points out that this is quite natural: under the conditions of permanent unemployment, growing taxes and inflation, and the monopolies' offensive against the workers' rights, the importance of the workers' struggles for their economic interests is steadily growing.

In June 1978, in his report on the tasks of the party in the struggles for better living conditions, Gus Hall recalled Lenin's well-known proposition on the significance of the proletariat's economic struggle.<sup>3</sup> "The mass of the working people will never agree to conceive of a general 'progress' of the country without economic demands, without an immediate and direct improvement in their condition. The masses are drawn into the movement, participate vigorously in it, value it highly and display heroism, self-sacrifice, perseverance and devotion to the great cause only if it makes for improving the economic condition of those who work... As it strives to improve its living conditions, the working class also pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1970-1978*; F.H. Cossell, J.J. Baron, *Collective Bargaining in the Public Sector: Cases in Public Policy*, Grid, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, 1975, pp. 175-77.

<sup>2</sup> C.S. Bunker, *Collective Bargaining: Non-Profit Sector*, Grid, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, 1973, pp. 192-99.

<sup>3</sup> *Political Affairs*, July 1978, pp. 10-11.



gresses morally, intellectually and politically, becomes more capable of achieving its great emancipatory aims."<sup>1</sup>

Analysis of strikers' demand shows that problems connected with their living standards still come first. In 1965-1976, 53 per cent of all strikes (66.7 per cent of days idle) were linked with demands for higher wages and improvements in the fringe benefits envisaging payments by the employers of unemployment relief, compensation money during illness, retirement benefits, hospital bills, medical services, leaves, etc.<sup>2</sup>

The degree to which these demands are realized can be assessed from the dynamics, absolute magnitude and real content of wages—the main form of income for the overwhelming majority of the USA's active population. In the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s, the nominal wages rose considerably. Real wages also increased somewhat. This was due to the spreading of the system of collective bargaining and the growing strike movement under conditions when the demand for manpower capable of servicing modern technology grew. In the 1970s, the impact of opposing factors, such as inflation and the government's restrictive regulation, came to the fore.

The role of labor unions and collective bargaining in increasing the wages is clear from the fact that the wages of organized workers are much higher than those of the unorganized. In 1971, the difference in the hourly wages of production workers of identical skill levels (union members and non-union workers) was 25 to 30 per cent in the private sector and 10 to 20 per cent in the public sector.<sup>3</sup> According to the US Labor Department statistics, in 1974 the difference in the average weekly wages between union members and unorganized workers amounted to 28.7 per cent. By 1979, the gap increased to 35 per cent.<sup>4</sup> In the private sector of the economy, the average hourly nominal wages in 1966-1976 on the whole grew by 90.8 per cent, while in the industries with a

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Economic and Political Strikes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1965-1976*.

<sup>3</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, December 1974, p. 3; *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, January 1978, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1979, p. 37.

high level of organization and strong unions the increase was much higher: 104.9 per cent in the automobile industry, 116.9 in coal-mining, 119.7 in steel, 125.9 in rail transport and 138.5 in communications.<sup>1</sup>

The results of the economic struggle by organized workers make a direct impact on the position of the non-unionized. In an attempt to prevent the organizing drive, the collective bargaining and strikes at their enterprises, corporations sometimes raise wages and improve the working conditions, as was the case at Kentucky coal mines and textile mills in Southern states.

Largely owing to the efforts of the unions, the 1938 act on the just hiring of labor which established minimum wage levels and maximum length of the workday was extended to more than 10 million workers in various areas of the economy and employment as a result of the 1966 and 1974 amendments. Organized labor movement played an active role in the passing by Congress in 1977 of the decision to raise the federal minimum of the wage rates. However important that measure might be for millions of low-paid workers, its limitations and inadequacy are obvious, particularly if one takes into account the growing rate of inflation.

As we have noted above, the dynamics of the wage growth in the 1970s and early 1980s was considerably affected by inflation. In 1973-1974, when the growth of consumer goods prices reached the annual average of 9.3 per cent, real wages went down in absolute terms—for the first time in the whole post-WW II period. Statistics from American sources show that between January 1973 and December 1975 the average hourly real wages dropped both throughout all of the economy and in the branches with a high level of organization of hired workers—the automobile industry, electrical engineering, construction, truck haulage, etc. Union members' losses in electrical engineering amounted to 7 per cent, in the rubber industry to 10 per cent, etc.<sup>2</sup>

During tense negotiations and acute strike conflicts in 1976, 1978 and 1979, the leading unions in the key industries man-

<sup>1</sup> *Collective Bargaining Review of 1976. Outlook for 1977*, Executive Office of the President, Council on Wage and Price Stability, Washington, 1977, pp. 34, 40, 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Labor Law Journal*, Chicago, August 1976, pp. 462-64.



aged to gain compensation for losses in wages due to inflation, and they also got a general increase in wages in the period covered by collective agreements.<sup>1</sup>

According to American economists' estimates, the wages must rise annually by 11 per cent merely to cover the losses in wages due to the annual 7 per cent rise in prices (which corresponds approximately to an average annual rise in the index of consumer prices in 1975-1978) and the increase in federal taxes.<sup>2</sup> Only major unions were able to achieve an hourly wage increase of 11 per cent and more during the renewal of collective agreements in 1977-1979. In 1979, it was done in spite of the government's decision on the 7 per cent "voluntary" ceiling on the annual wage growth.

The UAW, the Teamsters, the rubber and the electrical workers' unions also improved their coefficients of automatic increases to cover the price growth. Not content with demands for direct increases, the unions insisted on including escalator clauses in collective agreements, envisaging automatic adjustment of wages to the official cost-of-living index.

Escalator clauses became a reliable means of defending organized workers from depreciation of their earnings. However, they could only serve to slow down, not to prevent, the fall in the workers' real incomes. Only in rare cases does an escalator clause fully cover the losses in wages due to price rises. In most cases the escalator clause formula accepted in collective agreements covers between 40 and 70 per cent in the rise of the cost of living. In 1968-1978, the increase in earnings provided by the escalator clause made up for merely 57 per cent of wage losses the workers sustained because of inflation.

By 1978, escalator clauses were included in collective agreements covering only 6.5 million, or one-third of all union members. Only 120,000 unorganized workers (in the manufacturing industries) were covered by the scheme. In the public sector, the right to escalator clause increases covers only 600,000 organized postal workers and about 400,000 state and

<sup>1</sup> *Collective Bargaining Review* of 1976, p. 10; *AFL-CIO News*, April 10, 1979, p. 2; *U.S. News & World Report*, April 2, 1979, pp. 63-64.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, December 12, 1978, p. 2.

municipal workers.<sup>1</sup> The wages and salaries in federal agencies rose by 5.5 per cent in October 1978, while the cost-of-living index rose by 9.3 per cent in the same year. That became the cause of an acute worsening of relations between federal employees' unions and the Carter administration.

The automobile industry provides a characteristic example of the struggle of organized workers for higher wages. According to George B. Morris, General Motors Vice President, an average auto worker's wages rose by 384 per cent between 1948 and 1976, and if one takes into account the fringe benefits, by 606 per cent. However, as the former UAW President Leonard Woodcock pointed out, although the figure 384 looked impressive, with the rate of inflation taken into account the worker's real wages in that period increased not more than 2.5 per cent annually. Indeed, the rise in nominal wages cannot be considered outside the context of the high cost-of-living growth rate. On the other hand, one must bear in mind the rising level of exploitation and growth of taxation.

In 1957, 12 cars per each auto worker were produced in the USA, while in 1977 the figure rose to 18. In other words, production per worker rose by half. At the same time, the real hourly wages of auto workers rose only by 41.5 per cent.

Simultaneously, there was an unprecedented growth in corporation profits. In 1948-1975, the profits of General Motors grew annually by 19 per cent, and in 1976-1978 by 22.5 per cent.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the gap between the well-being of workers and the enrichment of capitalists living by the workers' unpaid labor further grew. In the 32 years from 1947 to 1978, a worker at the General Motors plants received \$279,000, while an average shareholder of that corporation got \$597,000.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, workers in this industry faced a sharp drop in their real incomes due to runaway inflation and an acute cri-

<sup>1</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, January 1977, pp. 23, 26; April 1978, p. 6; H.M. Douty, *Cost-of-Living Escalator Clauses and Inflation*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 1975, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, July 1979, pp. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

sis in the automobile industry. In an attempt to find a way out of the financial difficulties, largely caused by Japanese competition, auto corporations decided to violate their collective agreement with the union which would only run out in 1982. The workers were faced with a harsh ultimatum: either they agree to a cut in wages and give up some of the benefits or there would be another wave of mass lay-offs (the number of unemployed in the industry was already more than 300,000). An austerity plan was thrust on the union which envisaged a wage freeze for nearly 2 years. As a result of a compromise between the union bureaucrats and the automobile concerns, Chrysler workers lost \$622 million and General Motors workers—\$462 million.

In February 1982, the union made considerable new concessions, accepting a prolongation of the austerity agreement on a wage freeze at the General Motors and Ford Motor plants until September 1984. The escalator clause was suspended for 9 months, and the length of paid leaves was sharply curtailed. As a result, estimated wage losses of each auto worker would be more than \$5,000 by the end of 1984.<sup>1</sup>

Taxes are a heavy burden for the working people. "To illustrate the effect of state-monopoly capitalism on the tax burden," Gus Hall said in 1978, "take as an example an auto worker. The average wage now, including the killing overtime, is \$400 per week, or \$20,000 per year. This just about meets the Department of Labor's standard for a family of four living at a moderate level.

"That's before the tax bite. That same auto worker, with 3 dependents, has \$4,400 in taxes taken from his paycheck. He pays another \$1,200 in taxes on his house, and another \$1,000 in sales taxes. Thus, he's left with \$13,400. And a single auto worker is drained of an additional \$1,800.

"It has now reached the point where \$3 out of every \$5 the federal government collects in taxes come from the workers' paychecks.

"Until 1940, there were no federal payroll taxes. By 1950, the tax bite into workers' wages was 11 per cent. Now it is 26 per cent and climbing... This is a critical new element in

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, February 18, 1982, p. 5.

exploitation, distribution of wealth, and a new factor in class struggle."<sup>1</sup>

At present, taxes swallow up to 40 per cent of the worker's pay. The share of monopoly corporations, because of various rebates and privileges, did not exceed 14 per cent of the total sum of federal revenues in 1981.<sup>2</sup>

The unions achieved some increase in the fringe benefits and an improvement in the social insurance systems. In 1965, less than half the collective agreements included workers' retirement benefits schemes at the expense of the employers, while in 1970 the share of such agreements rose to 87 per cent.<sup>3</sup> There are grounds to believe that in 1975, of the 30 million American workers covered by private insurance and entitled to pensions from the employers' funds, about two-thirds were union members.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of the 1970s, the maximum amount of pensions of the organized longshoremen of the East and West Coasts rose to \$550 per month, of the UAW members—to \$700, and of steelworkers—up to 85 per cent of their pay before retirement. On attaining the retirement age at which a worker is entitled to a pension from the government in accordance with the social welfare act, the size of the private pension is reduced. Still, in accordance with that act, a member of the auto workers' union can get up to \$900-950 per month (private and federal pensions taken together), which is more than twice as much as for those who are not covered by the system of private old-age pensions.<sup>5</sup>

A situation has arisen where the pensions of some categories of retired workers are higher than wages of those who continue to work full time. It should be stressed, however, that

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, December 1978, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, June 1981, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Labor Relations Yearbook 1970*, Washington, 1971, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts, May 1975*, The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., Washington, 1975, p. 26; *Monthly Labor Review*, February 1979, p. 29; *Daily World*, December 12, 1980; see also G. Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> In 1978, the average single worker's federal pension was \$258 per month, and that for a worker and his wife—\$429. That is below the cost of living minimum. Of the 24 million old-age US citizens, about one in seven has an income below the poverty line. See *AFL-CIO News*, May 5, 1979, p. 8.

such retirement benefits were only won by the most powerful labor unions in the mass production industries. Where the unions are weaker, the private retirement benefits are much lower.

The strongest unions in the leading highly monopolized branches of production (the steelworkers in 1965, the auto workers in 1973) won the right for their members to retire after 30 years of service regardless of age and with full pension benefits. On the whole, only a few unions succeeded in bringing down the age threshold for maximum pensions. According to the collective agreements, 93 per cent of the private retirement insurance plans in 1973 envisaged the payments of such benefits only to the worker reaching the age of 65 (i.e., the same as the federal retirement age), and only in 7 per cent of the plans were the age requirements lower (between 55 and 62 years).<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that only a few old-age pensioners enjoy such retirement benefits. As a rule, the pensions paid from the funds of the employers constitute only one-fifth of the previous earnings. Thus, the average benefit of a retired UAW member (and there are 310,000 of them) seldom exceeds \$250 per month.<sup>2</sup>

Only in some cases have the unions been able to include the escalator clause in private retirement plans (beginning from 1974, federal pensions and other welfare are geared to the rise in the cost of living). Such agreements have only been signed in the canning, aluminum, and steel industries. Growing inflation rapidly eats away the real value of the pensions and other fringe benefits.

According to data of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the share of union members who have the right to receive additional unemployment welfare from the employers' Supplemental Unemployment Funds rose from 40 to 64 per cent of all organized workers from 1963 to 1975.<sup>3</sup> But these statistics only apply to collective agreements covering more than a thousand workers. In 1977, the total number of workers

<sup>1</sup> *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, May 1975, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, April 1979, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Characteristics of Major Collective Bargaining Agreements*, July 1, 1975, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1977, p. 90.

participating in such agreements was 9.9 million, i.e., about half of all union members.<sup>1</sup> In the early 1970s, only one in four American workers was covered by private unemployment insurance. Supplemental payments combined with federal welfare compensate between 55 and 80 per cent of unemployed union members' weekly pay.

Collective agreements in the automobile industry envisage the payment during 52 weeks of about 95 per cent of the previous earnings to dismissed workers with a two-year seniority (that sum includes the federal unemployment relief as well). At a time of mass lay-offs during the economic crisis of 1974-1975, the payment of these benefits by the Chrysler and General Motors corporations was suspended because the Supplemental Unemployment Funds had run out.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with the 1976-1978 collective agreements, workers in the automobile, electrical engineering, steel and some other industries gained increases in the contributions by corporations to unemployment funds and additional guarantees of full unemployment relief to dismissed workers. Just how firm those guarantees were in the case of auto workers showed the suspension of unemployment relief, "due to financial difficulties", by the Chrysler corporation in the fall of 1979, when it actually found itself on the brink of bankruptcy. Nearly one-third of the 100,000 Chrysler workers were laid off and could only look forward to federal relief.<sup>3</sup>

According to the 1977 collective agreement, the period of unemployment relief in the steel industry was extended from 52 to 104 weeks, but only for workers with 20 years of seniority or more.<sup>4</sup> At the beginning of 1978, 40 per cent of those engaged in this industry had that length of seniority. Organized workers also won an increase in the average length of paid leaves for greater number of workers employed at unionized enterprises.

The United States has no government participation in the health service, with the exception of aid for the poor and the aged (the Medicaid and Medicare federal programs). At the same time, the cost of medical service grows rapidly. For

<sup>1</sup> *Collective Bargaining Review*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, January 15, 1976, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Political Affairs*, July 1979, p. 10; *Daily World*, October 23, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> *The New York Times*, April 10, 1977.

this reason, the struggle for agreements which would include employers' participation in paying union members' medical care expenses figured prominently in union action in the 1970s. Only between 1970 and 1973, the share of collective agreements envisaging compensation and aid to the sick increased from 55 to 82 per cent of the total, from 67 to 96 per cent in the cases of hospitalization, from 59 to 93 in surgical operations, and from 32 to 65 per cent in other kinds of medical aid.<sup>1</sup> Later, this share continued to grow.

However, even major unions cannot secure full compensation for the ever increasing cost of medical care or a substantive improvement in the system of health insurance by the employers. Thus, in 1976, the Teamsters Brotherhood compelled the employers to raise considerably their contribution to the health service fund, but that did not bring about any improvement in the quality of the service: all rises were swallowed by the inflation.

Under these conditions, organized workers see ever more clearly the inadequacy and limitations of solving this issue on the basis of collective agreements only. The leading unions now advocate a unified national system of health insurance, and medical aid for the working people paid for from the federal budget and corporations' funds.

In 1960-1980, the share of supplements to wages and salaries in the overall compensation for an average non-agricultural worker rose from 7.8 to 15.8 per cent, according to the US Department of Commerce.<sup>2</sup>

In assessing the results of the unions' struggle for the development of fringe benefits programs and private insurance by employers, it should be observed that changes in the structure of compensation for workers answered the needs of monopoly capital which needed new funds for the reconstruction and modernization: accumulated insurance funds were used by the employers to make additional capital investments in industry. By enlarging retirement and other insurance funds, corporations planned to bind the workers to the company and restrict their mobility, to sap their discontent and militancy by threats of taking away retirement and other benefits. The

<sup>1</sup> *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1981, p. 5.

sums which the employers paid into those funds were tax deductible.<sup>1</sup> The supplemental payments (retirement, unemployment, disability, industrial accident, and other benefits) relieved social tensions in acute situations arising during lay-offs.

Apart from these problems, the employment issue also became a most acute one for the organized labor movement. The unions fought on two fronts to achieve full employment: they demanded guarantees to be included in collective agreements for maintaining a previous level of employment or maximum compensation for workers in case of job loss, and they insisted on securing employment for those out of work and on creating new jobs within the framework of federal programs. In 1965-1976, more than 10 per cent of all strikes, 14 per cent of strikers and 10 per cent of man-days lost were linked with the fight against lay-offs and for maintaining workplaces.<sup>2</sup>

Labor unions fought for restricting subcontracting—transference of production operations to other enterprises of the same company or to other firms. In 1973, subcontracting was limited or prohibited in 40 per cent of collective agreements (35 per cent in 1970, 28 in 1965, and 19 per cent in 1960). 43 per cent of these agreements stipulated the management's advance consultation with the union, and 20 per cent established union control including the right to veto such an operation.<sup>3</sup> In later years, the unions also paid great attention to this area of collective bargaining.

Much less frequently collective agreements envisage measures for regulating and controlling dismissals following technological changes and automation. In 1973, appropriate clauses were included in only 19 per cent of collective contracts (14 per cent in 1970), 13 per cent of these providing for obligatory discussion with union representatives of the terms of the introduction of new equipment and measures for preventing and restricting dismissals.<sup>4</sup>

The East and West Coast longshoremen and the unions of New York typographical and postal workers achieved certain

<sup>1</sup> G. Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 212; *Daily World*, February 13, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Computed from *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1965-1976*.

<sup>3</sup> *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

successes in securing guarantees of employment in connection with automation. The longshoremen signed contracts guaranteeing minimal pay on an annual basis for skilled workers in cases of idle time during the contract period. In all these cases the employers undertook not to cut the work force: reduction of workplaces was only permitted in cases of the worker's retirement, disease, death, etc.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most important issues in the struggle of organized labor against the adverse consequences of the scientific and technological revolution was their fight for guaranteed annual wages. However, the results of these efforts were quite insignificant. In 1975, only 6 collective agreements, covering less than 62,000 workers in the private sector of the economy, included the guaranteed annual pay clause, all of them containing reservations on the possibility of temporary suspension of the guarantees for "reasons beyond the employer's control", i.e., in case of an overproduction crisis.<sup>2</sup>

It is thus obvious that the US labor movement is only beginning to work out forms of opposing mass dismissals due to automation and other technological innovations.

There is also very little that the unions can do in cases of mass lay-offs connected with relocation or shutdown of enterprises. In the mid-1970s, only 17 per cent of the contracts included clauses stipulating the union's right to discuss such moves with the employers.<sup>3</sup> Only 11 contracts, covering 184,500 workers, or 2.5 per cent of all participants in large-scale settlements, included provisions for union agreement to plant relocation. Employment of dismissed workers at newly opening plants of the company ("transfer rights") is stipulated in 46 per cent of the contracts.<sup>4</sup> Transfer payments are provided for in 11 major agreements covering some 29 per cent of all the beneficiaries of such settlements.

The unions also made some gains in compensation for dismissed workers. It must be borne in mind that under the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution it is easier for the capitalists to pay the redundant worker off than

<sup>1</sup> *AFL-CIO News*, September 23, 1978, pp. 1-2; G. Green, *Op. cit.*, pp. 97-99; *Political Affairs*, September 1978, pp. 12-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Characteristics of Major Collective Bargaining Agreements*, July 1, 1975, p. 92; *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

to find an employment for him. By far not all collective agreements provide for compensation for those sacked following technological innovations, shutdowns or plant relocation. In 1966, compensation in such situations was stipulated in 38 per cent of collective agreements, in 1970—in 40, and in 1973—in 48 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Protesting against factory closure and lay-offs, workers more often resort now to such forms and methods of struggle as demonstrations, rallies, protest marches and sit-in strikes.

Sit-ins are banned by law, as is well known, and still they occur. In August 1973, 200 workers of the Chrysler company took over a plant. The same method was used by Anaconda Copper workers in New York State in 1975. The workers' initiative, supported by the local population, developed into a mass antimonopoly action. When a Pepsico plant in Brooklyn, New York, was closed, the workers refused to obey the decision, and their union warned the company that it would organize a boycott of all its products. In New Jersey, in 1974, there was a successful strike by railworkers who threatened to stop all trains belonging to the Jersey Central Company. The workers protested against the intention of the company to discontinue the operation of the railroad.

In November 1979, workers occupied the offices of the U.S. Steel corporation in Pittsburgh in protest against its decision to close plants said to be unprofitable and fire 13,000 men.<sup>2</sup> In January 1980, steelworkers at Youngstown, Ohio, followed their example and also occupied U.S. Steel offices for several hours. They left the premises only after the company representatives, frightened by the threat of a general strike, agreed to start negotiations.<sup>3</sup> In May 1981, there was a spontaneous sit-in at a Detroit plant of the Chrysler corporation to protest against mass lay-offs and deteriorating working conditions.<sup>4</sup> American Communists believe that at a time of mass unemployment, when finding new jobs is an acute problem, "the old and effective sit-in tactics of the mid-thirties may reappear on a wider scale".<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, pp. 41-43.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, December 1, 1979.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, January 30, 1980.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, May 28, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> G. Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 277.

Collective agreements envisage practically no measures against the jobs drain—when the monopolies move production outside the USA to countries and regions with cheap labor. In situations like this, it all ends in the workers being paid a discharge grant in a lump sum. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, this problem is vital for the American labor movement because of the activity of the multinational corporations mostly controlled by American capital and capable of effectively opposing the working-class struggle.

According to union statistics, multinationals' investment and commercial operations lost the Americans more than 2 million jobs in just one decade (a million jobs only between 1974 and 1976).<sup>1</sup> For this reason, the unions advocate increased government control over the activities of multinational companies, in the first place in the sphere of capital export. In recent years, they have been demanding that collective agreements should include certain guarantees against dismissals due to the export of jobs.

In their search for the solution of this problem unions turn to legislative bodies. The influential UAW, the United Steelworkers and the International Association of Machinists did so. The Ford-Riegle bill, intended to ensure employment, proposed by a group of congressmen in July 1979 and officially supported by the AFL-CIO, defines measures for restricting and preventing the relocation of plants and export of jobs.

In accordance with the bill, employers must provide jobs for laid-off workers at relocated or newly opening plants, or pay them a lump sum on discharge—85 per cent of their annual earnings. The federal government must guarantee the financial support of such payments and subsidize retraining programs to make new employment easier. The bill requires advance notification of a plant shutdown.<sup>2</sup> The bill does not propose any radical solution for the problem of mass lay-offs but it still meets with stubborn resistance of big business.

The 1974 Trade Act reflected the unions's demand for compensation to workers losing their jobs because of increased

<sup>1</sup> *AFL-CIO News*, June 17, 1978, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World. World Magazine*, December 13, 1979, p. 21.

imports of goods produced at American-owned enterprises abroad. The unions have the right to claim federal compensation for the unemployed. The readjustment allowance amounts to 70 per cent of the workers' weekly wage, but it must not be higher than the average wages in the manufacturing industry. The allowance is paid during 52 weeks. But these claims are by no means always satisfied. The procedure for considering them is complicated. Since this bill was passed, 430,000 workers have been certified as eligible to receive compensation, but nearly 500,000 claims were refused.<sup>1</sup>

The struggle against multinational corporations for the interests of the working class requires close coordination of union action on a world scale. But the American labor movement on the whole is not yet ready for such a struggle.

Some American union leaders believe that it is the import of foreign goods and competition from cheap foreign labor that are the main cause of the reduction of jobs and the growing unemployment in the USA. Acting in the traditional spirit of Gompersism, they launched a vigorous campaign against imports and for restricting trade quotas. In evaluating their actions, Gil Green has emphasized that such unions are not "fighting realistically and effectively. Such efforts will only sharpen the international trade war."<sup>2</sup>

Increasing paid leaves, introducing additional days off, etc., are regarded by the unions as ways to maintain a stable level of employment. A lower retirement age has become one of the most important demand of strikers. Many collective agreements (32 per cent of all) include clauses of early retirement on favorable terms, with payment of additional allowances, but only a few of the unions, the stronger ones, have secured actual implementation of early retirement with the benefit fully paid.<sup>3</sup>

Cutting the working hours while retaining full pay might become a constructive solution of the problem of employment. This has been a program demand recognized by all leading unions and the AFL-CIO. However, American workers have

<sup>1</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1979, p. 21; *AFL-CIO News*, March 3, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> G. Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1977, p. 62; December 1978, pp. 68-69; *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, pp. 28-29.



not yet achieved any tangible results in the realization of that demand. In the mid-1970s, only 6 per cent of collective agreements provided for a standard work week of less than 40 hours.<sup>1</sup> None of the mass unions have succeeded in including the requirement for a shorter work week in the collective agreement. This objective has only been achieved by some craft unions of skilled workers in print-shops, construction, and some other branches of the economy. Unwilling to hire fresh labor, the companies balk at reducing working hours; where the need arises, they widely resort to overtime. Paying for overtime is more profitable to the employer as he makes a saving on hiring and training expenses and the fringe benefits that are not included in overtime payments.

There is a growing understanding in the unions that the employment problem cannot be solved by means of collective agreements only; responsible political decisions are also necessary. The struggle for full employment legislation figured prominently in the US labor movement in the second half of the 1970s. The initiative of the All Union Committee to Shorten the Work Week, set up in October 1977 at a conference in Detroit of representatives of the major American unions, gained wide support. The Committee aimed to secure the passage of a bill on shortening the work week to 35 hours while maintaining wages at the existing level. All forced overtime must be banned.

The bill was introduced by Representative John Conyers. An estimated 1.5 million jobs would be created by cutting the work week by one hour only. The bill was supported by the leaders of the auto workers', the miners', the electrical engineering workers', the machinists' and the hospital and health service workers' unions. It was endorsed by many influential locals in the machinists', steelworkers' and electrical workers' unions. Similar decisions were taken by the AFL-CIO union councils in the states of Iowa, New York, Illinois, Indiana, California and Connecticut. The bill was also supported by the AFL-CIO.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Labor Relations Yearbook*, 1970, p. 39; *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, p. 49; *Characteristics of Major Collective Bargaining Agreements*, July 1, 1975, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, September 1978, pp. 5-7; *Daily World*, October 24, 27, 1979.

Progressive unions and realistically minded union leaders realize that an effective solution of the employment problem, curbing inflation and securing jobs for the younger generation are impossible without restrictions on the monopolies' profits and reduction in the country's military expenditure. In the late 1970s, the unions of auto workers, machinists, chemical workers, and government employees came out in favor of Congress passing the resolution introduced by Representative Parren Mitchell proposing to cut military spending by \$10 billion and transferring those funds to domestic programs meeting people's needs.<sup>1</sup>

The leadership of a number of major unions came out for ratification by the Senate of the Soviet-American Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II).<sup>2</sup> The Executive Board of the United Auto Workers called the treaty a "positive step toward world peace". The Board stated: "The economic benefits to American taxpayers and to working people in particular are, in our view, considerable... More federal funds can be spent ... on higher Social Security benefits and other vital domestic programs."<sup>3</sup>

In the period considered here, the fight to extend the workers' rights in the production process and for the unions' role in regulating the conditions and organization of labor became yet another direction of the strike movement. The emphasis on what is referred to as non-wage demands has increased; these include the slowing down of the pace of work, improving safety regulations and sanitary conditions at workplaces, regulating the workloads, shifts and overtime, looking into worker's complaints, granting union representation, banning race discrimination, improving the position of women and young people at plants, etc.<sup>4</sup> In 1965, some 15 per cent of strikes were to some extent or other due to such causes, while in 1976 their number rose to 25 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

Protection of workers against the growing speed-up is closely bound up with their fight to retain jobs. That refers

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, April 1979, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, May 9, June 16, 21, November 21, 1979.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily World*, May 24, 1978, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> J. Brecher, *Strikes*, Straight Arrow Books, San Francisco, 1972, p. 274; *Auto Work and Its Discontents*, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Computed from *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1965-1976*.

in the first place to such demands as banning forced overtime, early retirement and limiting the employers' rights in controlling the work force: distribution of the load, changing the crew size, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The non-wage demands often constitute the greatest difficulties in negotiations with employers, who regard them as infringement on their managerial prerogatives. Union leaders often use them as an area for maneuver and compromise in discussing demands on wages and hours.

In the 1970s, these problems were often the source of acute industrial conflicts. Managers' refusal to satisfy workers' demands concerning improvements in the working conditions was the main cause of the growing number of wildcat strikes called by union locals and the rank and file. Conflicts of such kind were the cause of many strikes in the auto industry in 1971-1973. The strikers protested against the exhausting pace of the production line, the dead monotony of production operations, and certain methods of capitalist rationalization.

Very much in the limelight was a strike by 10,000 General Motors workers in Lordstown, Ohio, in early 1972, which went down in the history of strike struggle as a young workers' rebellion. Certain protective measures against speed-up in the automobile industry were envisaged in the 1970 national collective agreement, which banned increases in the speed of production lines and changes in the work rules in the 3-year period covered by the agreement. It confirmed the right to strike in that period if the stipulated load was exceeded. However, the right to strike in similar situations was only safeguarded in 3.6 per cent of the collective agreements then effective in the USA.<sup>2</sup>

The auto workers repeatedly used that right to make the employers adhere strictly to the agreement's terms. During local strikes in 1975-1977, the workers secured a lower pace of work and less hazardous working conditions. (The speed of the production line was also lowered as a result of the fight put up by the workers at the General Motors plant in Lordstown, where the pace had been the highest in the world, as the corporation itself admitted.) The management of the plants also

<sup>1</sup> *Characteristics of Major Collective Bargaining Agreements, July 1, 1975*, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Labor Relations Yearbook, 1970*, p. 45.

had to take measures to improve the system of dealing with industrial disputes and to limit to some extent the managers' disciplinary rights.

Similar problems were most acute in the other branches as well, and American labor unions achieved certain results in solving them in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the 1970s, the unions fought more vigorously for extending their control over safety of labor.<sup>1</sup> In 1970, clauses requiring employers to take measures for labor protection were included in 65 per cent of collective agreements, and in 1973—in 82 per cent. 39 per cent of union contracts provided for the setting up of joint union-management safety and health committees (in 1970, there were 31 per cent of these). The requirement of regular inspection of health and safety conditions was contained in 17 per cent of the agreements, and 24 per cent included clauses on preventive medical check-ups for workers. Obligatory inquiry into accidents was provided only in 13 per cent of the collective agreements.<sup>2</sup> 15 per cent of the contracts recorded the workers' right to refuse hazardous work and to leave their workplace under conditions creating a threat to life and limb (in 1969, the figure was 7 per cent).<sup>3</sup>

Auto workers made a real gain in improving labor protection when a clause was introduced into collective agreements providing for full-time health and safety union representatives in the plants of the Big Three. Some measures toward controlling the use of toxic chemical substances and the dynamics of occupational diseases are taken by the trade unions in the oil, chemical and atomic industries.

In the 1960-1980s, miners also led a tense battle for safety regulations. Despite the fact that the miner's is still one of the most dangerous occupations, the level of labor protection in the mines in the USA is the lowest even compared with other capitalist countries.<sup>4</sup> In coal-mining, the working conditions and labor protection are regulated by the 1969 Coal Mine Health and Safety Act passed under pressure from miners.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, March 22, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, pp. 126-27; *Labor Relations Yearbook, 1969*, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Labor Relations Yearbook, 1969*, p. 35; *Basic Patterns in Union Contracts*, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> *Daily World*, January 12, 1979, p. 5.

That was a considerable victory for the miners. The rate of accidents with fatal outcomes decreased significantly. As a result of the 1974 national strike, a new collective agreement was signed including provisions for the production process control. Union representatives forming safety committees were now permitted entrance to the faces to inspect the working conditions. Each quarter, mines are inspected by the officials of the federal technical supervision service.

An important milestone in the workers' struggle for the right to control working conditions was the 1977-1978 national coal-miners' strike, an expression of mass protest against the anti-labor policy of the mine-owners who sabotaged the collective agreement. One of the miners' main demands was the right of the locals to call strikes in separate mines and areas in cases of violation of labor protection and deterioration of the working conditions.

In 1970, after many years of struggle, the unions pressed the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Law. It stipulated punishment for violation of health and safety regulations: a fine of up to \$10,000 or a prison sentence up to 6 months, or both for repeated offences or accidents causing death.<sup>1</sup> However, the US Department of Labor agency supervising the implementation of the law has neither the personnel nor the funds, nor sufficient authority to secure its enforcement.

At the present stage, one of the main features of the proletarian's economic struggle in the developed capitalist countries is a new level of demands indicating the growing militancy of the working class, which combines defence of the everyday needs and gains of the working people with actions against the foundations of the ruling circles' economic and social policies, against the power of the monopolies. Significant in this respect is the demand of the US labor unions for a right to participate in decision making on a number of issues in the production process. They regard this right as a lever to restrict the monopolies' arbitrary rule in organization of production, employment and management of hired personnel.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, June 7, 1979, p. 6.

As we have noted, in the period under consideration organized labor made certain headway in such areas as the extension of union control so as to restrict and ban subcontracting, regulation of lay-offs over technological innovations, and lower retirement age. Let us also point out measures against speed-up, a better system of settling industrial disputes, and expansion of control over labor protection and safety regulations. Labor representation in plant management was increased to curb the employers' abuses in work discipline (union shop stewards) and to control the working conditions (health and safety representatives and safety committees).

Thus, despite the stubborn resistance of the capitalists, the sphere of regulating industrial relations on the basis of the collective agreement was, in fact, extended at the expense of the prerogatives of the employers and their arbitrary exercise of power.

The unions now come out with a broad program including both the traditional economic demands and the fight for improving labor legislation, social reforms, and democratization of the country's entire social system. More and more often nationwide issues are pushed into the foreground. With a great effort, workers and their unions wrest more or less substantial concessions from the monopolies, such as paid leaves and higher wages, retirement benefits and other social security welfare.

By stepping up their efforts in the legislative sphere, the unions secured rises in the minimum wage rates and certain measures in labor protection and free health service for the aged and poor. Despite certain gains, however, American labor unions have not been able to effect a radical change in defending the interests of workers, both organized and unorganized. Thus, in 1979, less than 10 per cent of employees were covered by the escalator clause. Even the strongest industrial unions have been unable to protect their members from dismissals.

In the early 1980s, capital's offensive against the real wages brought the workers grave losses. The wages in the automobile, steel, rubber and other industries were frozen, partially or completely, during the period covered by the collective agreement. A new sharp price rise slashed the real incomes of workers by an average of 5.5 per cent in 1980 alone. Between 1973 and 1980, according to official statistics, the real

earnings of hired workers dropped by 10.5 per cent (15 per cent, according to the press). There had been no similar deterioration in the working people's living standards since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The reasons for this do not lie only in the intensified anti-labor policies of the monopolies. Under the state-monopoly system, the role of the government has grown considerably in the offensive of big business against the working people's vital interests and rights. The state has become an active and aggressive agent in the monopolies' offensive.

#### Government Intervention in Industrial Conflicts

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a considerable increase in the government agencies' many-sided intervention in the industrial conflicts, aimed at restricting the scope of the workers' actions and subordinating them to effective control by these agencies. During that period, there was not a single major industrial conflict in which the government did not interfere, directly or indirectly.

In the second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s, under Presidents Johnson and Nixon, the US administration persistently searched for new and more effective means of fighting the strike movement. The policy that geared pay rises to increases in productivity was resolutely rejected by the unions and actually broke down already in 1966. In this situation, the monopolies, more than ever, relied in their struggle with the unions on the support of the principal strikebreaker, the government.

As has been noted, the presidents resorted more and more often to emergency anti-strike procedures under the Taft-Hartley Act. In connection with the escalation of US military operations in Vietnam, the ruling circles were ready to apply the most extreme measures in their fight against the strikers, alleged to threaten the national interests and the country's security.

Johnson used his anti-strike emergency powers under the Taft-Hartley Act 7 times; in 1970-1971, Nixon resorted to them 6 times. Between 1947, when the Taft-Hartley Act

was passed, and 1971, US presidents resorted to emergency procedures in a total of 34 labor disputes.<sup>1</sup>

Another frequently used device is ad hoc legislation, i.e., legislation passed to deal with a specific situation. In April 1967, the US Congress, for the second time since 1963, disrupted a national rail strike by passing a government-sponsored law on compulsory arbitration of the dispute. In the following 3 months, Congress, at President Johnson's request, twice extended the period of statutory restraint so as to delay the strike.<sup>2</sup> Nixon also often resorted to such reactionary measures. Congress used anti-strike laws against railwaymen 5 times: 3 times in 1970, and then in 1971 and 1973. In 1972, the law on compulsory arbitration was invoked to break the West Coast longshoremen's strike.

Apart from this, Presidents Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter invoked the 1926 special legislation to interfere in industrial conflicts on the railways. That legislation provides for the US president to appoint emergency commissions to settle acute conflicts. In 1965-1973, such commissions were set up in 23 instances, and in 1974-1979—in 6.<sup>3</sup>

Compulsory arbitration and other emergency measures could not ease the industrial tensions. Still, they prepared to some extent the transition to a new stage in the government's social policy, directly linked with expanding state-monopoly regulation of the economy. The state's positions as the supreme arbiter in the relations between labor and capital became stronger. The new economic policy of price and wage controls implemented by the Republican administration in 1971-1974 complicated the position of the unions.

A more flexible form of interference in labor relations through government regulation, compromise decisions and reliance on labor union bureaucracy was also further developed. This policy was in fact aimed at integrating the union elite in state-monopoly capitalism and at establishing "class peace" in industry. In the 1960s and 1970s, various consultative commissions and committees were set up aimed to work out and coordinate mutually acceptable policies and closer

<sup>1</sup> *Labor Relations Yearbook 1973*, Washington, 1974, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, December 1971, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Reports of the National Mediation Board, 1966-1977*, Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., Washington, 1967-1979.

cooperation between union leaders and representatives of the monopolies under government control.

In the same period, there was a considerable increase in the activities of such administrative agencies as the National Labor Relations Board, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), and the Department of Labor which constitute the basis of government regulation of labor relations and intervention in labor conflicts. These agencies are not endowed, like the President, with the powers of banning strikes outright, but under certain circumstances they can resort to this means. Using the permanently functioning mediation mechanism, the government breaks or prevents annually thousands of strikes, including even those that are within law according to the US legislation. In 1965-1979, an average of 46.4 per cent of all strikes each year were settled with participation of government mediation service.<sup>1</sup>

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service is the main agency in settling industrial disputes. Its sphere of competence mostly includes conflicts arising in the signing and prolongation of collective agreements. In all, FMCS officials mediated in more than 262,000 industrial conflicts between 1965 and 1978. FMCS participation in settling such disputes steadily grows: there were 1,320 cases in 1960, 1,887 in 1965, 2,849 in 1970, and 6,826 in 1978.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1970s, the FMCS greatly extended its activity in preventive mediation, i.e., averting strikes by means of active encouragement of permanent negotiations between labor unions and employers. For this purpose, labor-management committees on industrial relations were set up. They were authorized to achieve compromises in collective bargaining through regular close contacts and consultations of the two sides and an FMCS representative.

According to the US Department of Labor, in 1972 the setting up of such committees was provided for in 208 major collective agreements covering 1,575,000, i.e., one-fourth of all organized workers participating in such agreements.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1965-1979.*

<sup>2</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1971, p. 16; *FMCS, Annual Reports, 1960-1978.*

<sup>3</sup> *Characteristics of Agreements Covering 1,000 Workers or More, July 1, 1972*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1973, p. 18.

Beginning with the 1970s, intervention in industrial disputes by the judiciary became more frequent, which in itself indicates a considerable acuteness of the industrial conflicts. The number of strikes broken by court injunctions grew steadily: 1.7 per cent of the total number of strikes in 1970, 2.3 in 1971, 3.1 in 1972, and 3.7 in 1973. That tendency became especially pronounced in the late 1970s in connection with the growing activity of the working people in the public sector.

In recent years, the injunctions were mostly directed against striking teachers. A refusal to comply with these injunctions usually entailed fines and imprisonment. Repressive measures were used against striking postal workers in the federal service in New Jersey and California in July 1978: 200 strikers were dismissed, 2,500 were disciplined in various ways.<sup>1</sup>

The authorities increasingly resort to police action to suppress strikes, dispersing picket-lines and carrying out mass arrests. There was a noticeable increase in this tendency in the Southern states against the background of the growing number of strikes and expanding organizing drive in this area. Here, right-to-work laws (passed in 20 states) are in force everywhere, forbidding union membership as a condition of employment. In January 1978, state troopers were used in Alabama against striking coal-miners. Trained in riot control, the troopers were assigned by Governor George Wallace "to protect non-union mines" near the De Soto State Park. Here, tear gas was used to disperse the miners picketing these mines.<sup>2</sup>

The Kentucky authorities resorted to similar police action.<sup>3</sup>

In October 1977, the authorities used the police to disperse pickets and to arrest participants in the Stearns mine strike, then 17 months old. The strike had broken out when the Blue Diamond company refused to recognize the United Mine Workers, although the workers had a formal right to collective bargaining in accordance with the result of the elections of union representatives conducted by the National Labor Relations Board.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, December 19, 1978, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, January 25, 1978, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, January 28, 1978, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Daily World. World Magazine*, December 24, 1977, p. 8.

In a similar way, the biggest US shipbuilding company Newport News Shipbuilding (Virginia) refused to sign a collective agreement with the United Steelworkers local which had gained the status of a fully authorized workers' representative in collective bargaining as a result of NLRB-supervised secret ballot. In January 1979, 16,000 workers of that company called a strike, one of the most protracted and fierce. April 16, 1979 went down in the history of that strike as "Bloody Monday". On that day, local police and state troopers sent to Newport News by Virginia Governor John Dalton went on a rampage, attacking the pickets with batons and cruelly beating them up. More than 50 injured strikers, some in a very bad condition, were brought to hospital. A police squad raided the headquarters of the USW local, charging the union with violating the right-to-work law.<sup>1</sup>

The same barbaric methods of suppression were used against striking miners in Illinois in August 1981. To break their demonstration, 150 policemen made baton charges and set dogs on them. Tear gas canisters were dropped on the demonstrators from helicopters.<sup>2</sup>

In all these actions, the employers crudely violated US laws, while the government made no move to defend the workers. There were cases when strikers died as a result of police brutality or were killed by hired thugs.<sup>3</sup>

In the late 1970s, the overall shift to the right in the sphere of government regulation of labor relations at the national level was reflected, as has been noted, in the Carter administration's attempt to use the Taft-Hartley Act, for the first time in 8 years, against striking miners in 1978. "There is an increase in the role of the state as a strikebreaker," the Central Committee of the CPUSA pointed out.<sup>4</sup>

As the workers' struggle for their rights grows, the ruling US circles cast off all semblance of democracy. Evidence of this is found in the openly anti-labor policy of the present Republican administration, which meted out harsh reprisals against the striking air-traffic controllers and their union;

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, December 30, 1978, April 18, 1979; May 22, 1979.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, August 21, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> *AFL-CIO News*, August 4, 1979, p. 7; *Dispatcher*, December 23, 1979; *U.S. News & World Report*, May 28, 1979, p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> *Political Affairs*, April 1979, p. 36.

this was justly regarded by the democratic public as an attempt to crush a union organization and a threat to the country's all labor unions.

The air-traffic controllers' strike in August 1981 revealed a crisis in the domestic policy of this administration. When the strikers rejected President Reagan's personal ultimatum giving them two weeks to return to their jobs, the federal authorities resorted to punitive measures. More than 12,000 controllers were dismissed without a discharge allowance, right to pension, or the right to seek public service again; 72 union leaders were fined enormous sums, and 5 of them were imprisoned; the authorities deprived the union of the right to represent the 15,000 controllers who were its members. In that way the American administration showed the kind of methods it would use in the future in such critical situations. In this connection Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Communist Party USA, emphasized that the reprisals against the striking air-traffic controllers were not an isolated or accidental event but "a designed act of government terrorism against the whole labor movement and the will of the people to resist encroachments by the Reagan gang carrying out the orders of the most reactionary sections of monopoly against the democratic rights and hard-won social gains of the working people."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, August 11, 1981, p. 3.



## CHAPTER IV

LABOR UNIONS AND THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE  
OF THE PARTIESThe Crisis of the Ideological and Political Alliance  
with Bourgeois Parties

The growing economic, political, and ideological contradictions of American capitalism strongly affect the evolution of non-Marxist political consciousness in the USA, which manifests itself, among other things, in the crisis of the ideological foundations of the "class partnership" policy.

The consolidation of the forces of monopoly capital, which uses the state apparatus to "freeze" or take away many of the workers' gains, greater use of the methods of coercion in the state's labor policy, and the restrictions imposed on the unions' rights to fight the system of state-monopoly exploitation of the working class, are now putting into the forefront the method of combining the workers' economic struggle with political activity independent of the bourgeois parties. The *New Program of the Communist Party USA* stresses that the center of gravity in the class struggle is shifting more and more into the political arena. The conflict between labor and capital becomes more and more a political struggle.

The politicization of trade unions embodies the principal content of the historical confrontation within them of two tendencies, progressive-democratic and conservative-opportunist. At a time when old concepts, old alliances and their set practices no longer meet the demands of mounting struggle, progressive forces endeavor to lead the working people's mass organizations to areas outside the bourgeois process of political activity. Trade union bureaucracy, exploiting in its turn the tenacity of trade unionist consciousness and of the slogans of "political compromises" between labor and capital, uses all sorts of methods to keep the unions' political links with the two-party bourgeois system. Union bureaucracy openly

comes out in support of the economic and political system of capitalism. This narrow caste advocating collaboration with the ruling circles helps the capitalist class to inculcate the ideas of class partnership in the workers' consciousness.

That is the US Communist Party's attitude to union leaders. But the latter are by no means a uniform mass. There are various groups among them, sometimes holding conflicting views on economic struggle, socio-political activity, the methods and essence of the interrelations between the unions and bourgeois parties and the government. The reason for that is that the bourgeois labor policy (which Lenin defined as "a nationalistic, middle class policy"<sup>1</sup> and which is still supported by considerable sections of the most conservative union leaders with their ideological and, to a great extent, material ties with capitalism) goes through various changes at different historical periods.

Union bureaucracy dominating the AFL-CIO leadership, headed by George Meany and in these days by his successor Lane Kirkland, does not conceal its collaboration with the ruling circles in their fight against the progressive forces within American society. It even takes credit for forming an alliance with the militarist circles in implementing an aggressive foreign policy and opposing détente. Characteristically, the AFL-CIO spends only two or three per cent of its annual budget on organizational activity, and 25 per cent on anti-Communist activities in foreign policy. President Kennedy referred to the Meany group as his right-wing opposition. This right-wing group of union bosses collaborating with bourgeois parties believes that its role in the country's socio-political life is to contribute to the stabilization of capitalist society.

The patriarch of "business unionism" Samuel Gompers said once: "It is through the gradual process of evolution, the improved habits and customs, that there is instilled into the minds of the people a recognition of the wrongs from which they suffer... The question of how they are going to get their rights can only be solved by the organized labor movement—

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Letter to the Secretary of the Socialist Propaganda League", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 424.

not by revolution, but by evolution."<sup>1</sup> Many years later, George Meany expressed the same idea: "The union has no desire to take over the enterprise from management. The union does not want to abolish profits or dividends. The union is seeking only what the workers believe is their fair share."<sup>2</sup> In his work *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin showed the untenability of trade union policy rejecting the need for the workers' realization of the class character of the economic and social phenomena in capitalist society.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of fighting to get a fair share of the value of the commodity produced is the basis of economic trade unionism. But even George Meany tried to modernize it in keeping with the changing situation in the world.

The development of state-monopoly capitalism and the growing acuteness of antagonistic contradictions between labor and capital it involves have long made US unions enter the political arena. The struggle for the right to organize unions, against restrictions on the right to strike and the reactionary anti-labor legislation, is political in nature. In recent times, particularly with the coming of the scientific and technological revolution, the fight for a shorter workweek and better social security, against unemployment and inflation, so vitally important for the labor movement, becomes political in content. The idea of nationalizing public transport and some industries is growing ever more popular among union members.

The conservative leadership of the AFL-CIO can no longer disregard these attitudes. Resorting to various sorts of maneuvers it looks for "better ways" of exerting pressure on the bourgeois parties. Meany said: "We don't have any political party, but we have a political machine... We devote a lot of time, we spend a lot of money, and we are pretty well organized politically. I think we're organized politically just as effectively, may be more effectively, than the big political parties."<sup>4</sup> To improve their bargaining positions with the

<sup>1</sup> S. Gompers, *Labor and the Common Welfare*, Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, New York, 1969, pp. 2, 150.

<sup>2</sup> G. Meany, "Labor's Role in a Free Society", *The American Federationist*, October 1966, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, pp. 399-408.

<sup>4</sup> *The Washington Post*, April 12, 1972, p. A8.

bourgeois parties, the extreme conservative union bureaucracy recently formed a bloc with right-wing social democracy.

Although the relations between the AFL-CIO and the bourgeois parties are largely determined by the pressures of the moment and concrete problems arising in each election campaign, the sympathies of the Federation's leadership are more with the Democratic Party, whose labor policy in the 1930s and the postwar years, more flexible than that of the Republicans, made a lasting impression in the minds of union masses.

The support which the unions and the broad masses of wage workers lent to the liberal circles from the Democratic Party were regarded by the working people as a means of fighting the reactionary forces in the bourgeois parties and winning "friends" in Congress and the administration.

At the same time union bureaucracy is sharply critical of any attempts by the radical elements to transform the Democratic Party.

Another group of union leaders, those of the centrist orientation, are more sensitive to the developments in the labor movement and advocate a rehauling of the two-party system and trade union participation in the working out of state policy. Without it, the two-party system will not survive, they believe. They aim at maintaining and extending the basis of social reformism which leaves room for concessions to the working class and promotion of the more capable members of the trade union movement to local administrative posts and to Congress. This group was headed by Walter Reuther, President of the United Auto Workers. A resolution passed by a convention of that union stressed the task of developing political activity and, most important, the new direction of that activity.

The political evolution of liberal union bureaucracy from "business unionism" to "social unionism", whose concepts envisage active collaboration with the liberal forces, is a contradictory process. It reflects the modernization of the views of centrist union circles in connection with the changes in the USA and in the world. Bourgeois ideologues react to "social unionist" concepts in their own way. They try to use them to substantiate the need for trade union collaboration with the socio-political system under the pretext of fighting

the allegedly growing threat from international communism. In their view, "social unionism" is an ensemble of theoretical concepts and tactical orientations at implementing the policy of class partnership in an increasingly difficult economic and social situation abounding in domestic and external contradictions.

The bourgeois theoreticians of "social unionism" advocate broader "political education" of workers and development of their feeling of "civic responsibility", as means of consolidating the country's political stability. Their maneuvers are aimed at keeping the unions within the two-party system. Trade union theoreticians share these views. One of them, Gus Tyler, believes that trade unions must become the most important instrument of defending the traditional basis of the American way of life and American democracy, opposing extreme right-wing reaction on the one hand and communism on the other.

The Republican Party, a traditional favorite with big business, did not have the same kind of hold on the union movement as the Democratic Party. It was mostly supported by a small group of union leaders and the most backward, racist-like, chauvinistic workers from some of the craft unions. In recent times, however, it began to establish contacts with union leadership. The Republicans try to take away the Democrats' privilege of being the party "defending the interests" of workers, national minorities, and low-income sections of the population.

The progressive forces of the USA approach "social unionism" from the point of view of possibilities to consolidate the positions of the left-and-center bloc in the unions, for breaking their ties with the two-party bourgeois system and making it the basis of a broad democratic coalition. The contradictions in the American union movement and its leadership undermine the foundations of the pragmatist philosophy and the positions of reactionary union bureaucrats, they extend the scope of the struggle within the American labor movement, accelerating the development of the political activity of labor organizations. The unions develop ever more clearly certain tendencies opposed to the bourgeois views of the nature of the political activities of workers' organizations under state-monopoly capitalism. The progressive tendencies in this political struggle are also strengthened by the

growing movement of the rank and file, its persistent attempts to create a mass workers' party independent of the bourgeoisie.

### The 1968 Election Campaign and the Contradictions in the Unions

Election campaigns profoundly affect the contradictions of the union movement in the socio-political area. The ruling circles have always used the election campaigns to demonstrate the advantages of American democracy; in reality, the politicians of the two leading bourgeois parties scattering promises to the people, deceiving them most disgracefully.

The two-party system obstructs the expression of the people's will, encouraging corruption, violence and demagoguery. "This so-called bipartisan system prevailing in America and Britain," wrote Lenin, "has been one of the most powerful means of preventing the rise of an independent working-class, i.e., genuinely socialist, party."<sup>1</sup>

Both the Democratic and the Republican parties consist of heterogeneous elements united by considerations of expediency in the struggle during presidential elections. It is for this reason that a small group expressing the centralized economic power of the corporations can easily maintain the political power of the monopolies as well.

Richard Nixon, an expert on the two-party system, said that the twin parties (the Democratic and the Republican) are guided by identical principles, the differences in the nuances almost entirely depending on candidates' character. Union leaders are also aware that "methodology rather than ideology separates today's political parties", as Joseph A. Beirne, President of the Communications Workers of America, wrote.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, "The Results and Significance of the U.S. Presidential Elections", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph A. Beirne, *Challenge to Labor. New Roles for American Trade Unions*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New York, 1969, p. 177.

The election procedure in the USA imposes severe limitations on the active participation and genuine expression of the will of the people's masses. The bourgeois parties have monopolized all the instruments of ideological and political influence, so that the progressive forces find it extremely difficult to state their case before the rank-and-file voter. The laws of most states deprive the Communist Party of the opportunity to take part in election campaigns. That is the true face of American liberties.

However, even in these conditions the fight itself between the politicians of the two major parties makes millions of common Americans ponder on their vital problems and evaluate both the platforms of the two bourgeois parties and the ideological and political orientations of union bureaucracy. An increasing number of trade union members stay away from the polls.

The formula "elections without a choice" correctly reflects the class character of the policy of the principal parties in the USA. But, although both the Republican and the Democratic parties remain bourgeois in their ideological basis and class orientation, they differ to some extent in their views of the ways, means and methods of protecting the interests of American capitalism and resolving acute social problems. This largely explains the fact that masses of voters have not yet thrown off the trammels of the two-party system. Under these conditions, a great responsibility naturally devolves on the union movement, which can be the source of a progressive democratic alternative in the solution of vital problems of US domestic and foreign policy.

In 1968, the issues of the costly and hopeless war in Vietnam, inflation, budget deficit, price and tax increases, the racial problem, rebellions of the Black poor and the dramatic growth of crime—in short, everything that had been acute campaign issues already in 1964—look on an especially critical character. The atmosphere in the country was extremely tense.

The Johnson administration's policy of social maneuvering, whose narrow confines and possibilities were still more cramped by the costly Vietnam war, could not eliminate tension in any of the spheres of social relations. The government's half-measures were criticized on nearly every side.

The working class was the most powerful and organized

force among those supporting the Democrats. Union leaders as a rule called on voters to support the Democratic candidate during the elections. The Gallup poll statistics show that beginning with 1936, union members and their families mostly voted for Democratic presidential candidates (the figures below are percentages)<sup>1</sup>:

Year	Democratic	Republican	Year	Democratic	Republican
1936	80	20	1952	61	39
1940	72	28	1956	57	43
1944	72	28	1960	65	35
1948	74	26	1964	73	27

Although the Johnson administration raised the minimal wage and gave up any attempt at setting its upper limit, the workers were on the whole dissatisfied with its socio-economic policy. The unions' demands to strike out Clause 14B of the Taft-Hartley Act, to cut the workweek to 35 hours, extend social security, etc., were not supported by the administration. Despite a favorable economic situation, unemployment was still between three and four per cent of the total workforce. The growth of real wages stopped. In 1965, the real wages of a worker with three dependents was \$78.53 per week, in 1966, \$78.29, and in 1967, \$77.49<sup>2</sup>.

Although the AFL-CIO leadership criticized Johnson's labor policy, it was slow in defending the interests of the working class or involving the broad masses of unorganized working people in trade unions; it also supported unreservedly the aggressive Vietnam policy. Dissatisfaction with that policy of the Meany group led to the setting up of a new trade union association comprising the major US unions: the Teamsters' Union, auto workers, aerospace workers, and oil and chemical workers. That alliance was unable to work out a democratic alternative of union activity and soon broke up. On the whole, however, the role of trade unions in the 1968 campaign grew considerably, and their political activity soon went beyond the boundaries within which the union bureaucracy and the ruling US circles would have liked to confine it.

<sup>1</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, September 23, 1968, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Labor Relations Yearbook*, 1967, Washington, 1968, p. 594.

Attempting to stifle the discontent among the broad masses, reactionary union bureaucrats asserted that the national liberation struggle undermined the economic positions of the USA, and called on the unions to support the government's actions in foreign policy and to fight international communism.

Joseph C. Goulden, Meany's biographer, wrote: "Later, as the Vietnam War discolored the national spirit, Johnson found Meany a wellspring of unqualified support and sympathy."<sup>1</sup> In the 1968 election campaign, the main criterion in the attitude of Meany and his group to presidential candidates was their position on the war in Indochina and the socialist countries. Not only did Meany's group refuse to support local progressive political trends and organizations—it also rejected the links with the left-wing liberal circles within the Democratic Party (Eugene McCarthy's group and others) which criticized the Johnson administration's domestic and foreign policy.

Under pressure from the masses, Lyndon Johnson gave up the idea of running in the 1968 election, which, as Goulden wrote, worried the Meany group in the extreme. Rejecting those candidates who might revise the basic lines of Johnson's policy, Meany insisted on the Executive Board of the AFL-CIO supporting Hubert Humphrey, the Democratic candidate, "friend of the unions" and an advocate of a hard line on Vietnam<sup>2</sup>.

Walter Reuther and other union leaders from Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Wisconsin supported Robert Kennedy as candidate.

The primaries were marked by great activity on the part of grass-root union organizations, and a rise in the movement of the Blacks and other radical democratic elements. Many simple Americans demanded an end to the aggression in Vietnam. Senator Eugene McCarthy, who held the same view, was widely supported by many union locals. At the conference of the Unions for Peace association in July 1967, which represented 60 locals of the major unions in 48 states, delegates expressed readiness to campaign for the withdrawal of the American troops from Vietnam and to support Eugene

<sup>1</sup> Joseph C. Goulden, *Meany*, Atheneum, New York, 1972, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph C. Goulden, *Op. cit.*, pp. 362-364.

McCarthy as candidate. A great number of Democratic followers at the local level demanded the setting up of a truly democratic coalition and banishment of conservative elements from the leadership of the party.

The 1968 elections showed that the ties between the Democratic Party and the unions were seriously impaired—for the first time since F.D. Roosevelt had been elected. Despite a vigorous campaign mounted by the AFL-CIO leadership, many rank-and-file members and their families voted against Humphrey. In 1964, 73 per cent of union members and their families voted for Johnson, while in 1968, in areas with predominantly working class population, Humphrey got 54 per cent of the vote in Philadelphia, 60 in Detroit, 53 in Chicago, 29 in Gary, 53 in Houston, 69 in New York, and 35 per cent in Los Angeles<sup>1</sup>.

During the elections to Congress, the AFL-CIO leadership mostly supported those candidates who approved of the administration's Vietnam policy, and opposed those who, like R. O'Dwyer of New York, criticized that policy. Union leaders of the state and city of New York supported Jacob Javits, who approved of the war in Vietnam, but a number of locals voted for O'Dwyer. In the event, the union vote was split, and Javits kept his seat in the Senate. This policy of the union leadership explains, to a considerable extent, the diminished role of trade unions in the elections. The Democrats' defeat was in some degree the defeat of the top AFL-CIO leaders.

Among the various classes and social groups, dissatisfaction with the results of the Democratic administration was not uniform in its sources, economic motivation, psychological impulses and political conclusions. The Johnson administration was criticized both on the left and on the right. That criticism reflected a sharp growth in the political activity of the population, including those sections of it that had been regarded as "silent" or passive 10 years before. That was evidence of further polarisation of the socio-political forces in the country. The ruling circles were especially worried by the growing disappointment among large sections of the population, especially among young people; that disappointment was no longer caused by some aspects of the administration's ac-

<sup>1</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, November 18, 1968, p. 43.

tivities but by the system of the political institutions itself, by bourgeois democracy. "Our political system," wrote Walter Lippmann, "has not been tested so critically for 100 years..."<sup>1</sup>

The falling influence of the Democratic Party and its defeat in the 1968 election reflected the disintegration of the broad coalition which had formed the mass basis of that party. It was caused, in the first place, by the growing crisis of liberal-bourgeois reformism at a time of acute aggravation of social and racial conflicts, and in the second, by the growing activity of the social strata and groups rejecting the Democrats' political course.

The crisis of the two-party system was manifested, among other things, in the appearance on the political scene of the extreme right-wing racist group headed by George Wallace, and in the disappointment many Americans felt about the policies of the principal parties, about the traditional methods and forms of political struggle. That system, however, still has the necessary strength and flexibility which enable it to perform its primary function—preventing the emergence and development of a mass political party of left-wing progressive orientation. The two-party bourgeois system is still capable of opposing organized mass attempts to challenge the basis of the imperialist bourgeoisie's domination. The results of the election show that the Democratic Party, even though it was defeated at the polls, again played its role of an outlet for the mass movements of discontent and protest.

And 1968 was the time of an upsurge, unprecedented since the 1930s, in the anti-war and general democratic movement, unrest among Blacks, young people, etc. However, even such a general democratic demand as the call to put an end to the Vietnam war, which involved the interests of extremely diverse strata of the people, failed to unite different opposition movements into a powerful, independent and organized political force. They could not overcome political and tactical differences on waging the election campaign, or work out a general platform and nominate joint candidates. The convention of the "new political forces" in Chicago in the summer 1967 did not bring about their organizational consolidation.

<sup>1</sup> *Newsweek*, October 1, 1968, p. 13.

The progressive movements were unable to choose independent national leaders from their midst.

During the election campaign, these movements mostly rallied round Senators Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy, moderate bourgeois leaders with close links with the Democratic Party and the two-party system as a whole. The liberal Eugene McCarthy, who challenged the party's leadership, withdrew from the campaign after his defeat at the Democratic convention. He refused to step outside the party framework, rejecting an appeal to campaign as an independent candidate. At the last stage of the election campaign, millions of his supporters found themselves without a leader.

It should also be noted that a great many liberals were frightened by the rapid growth of radical tendencies among the Black and other democratic movements. The ideological pluralism of the bourgeois intelligentsia, the strength of the American political traditions and the influence of the two-party system made themselves felt. As a result, the numerous mass actions by the people, marches, demonstrations, etc., that had shaken the country for several years, did not have a marked effect on the presidential elections. That serious failure of the progressive and democratic forces necessitated a critical reappraisal of their activities and the working out of tactics that would enable them to exert a more drastic impact on election results in future.

The significance of the Republican presidential candidate's victory after eight years of Democratic administration, which in its turn had followed an eight-year-long incumbency of a Republican at the White House, goes beyond the traditional swinging of the political pendulum within the two-party system. Apart from 31 million moderately conservative and purely conservative Nixon's supporters, some ten million conservative and racist voters supported the fascist demagogue Wallace. The result of the presidential elections thus reflected an obvious growth of conservative and ultraconservative trends in the US socio-political life.

There were certain specific features about the 1968 election campaign. The Republican Party more and more gave up the policy of sharp division of voters between the two parties, working out a program of action that appealed to all social forces and groups. Richard Nixon and the Republican leadership showed marked flexibility in this respect.



The candidate of the "third party", the American Independent Party, George Wallace, ran the 1968 election and achieved a greater success than any of the "third party" extreme right-wing candidates of the past. William Lemke, the candidate of the pro-fascist organizations, had polled two per cent of the vote in 1936. In 1948, Strom Thurmond, the racist States Rights candidate for president, got 2.4 per cent. In 1964, the Southern racist Harry Byrd gathered less than 0.5 per cent.

The growth of reactionary and conservative attitudes and activities during the 1968 election campaign was due to objective shifts in the socio-economic structure of the USA as well as to a spreading individualistic, chauvinistic and anti-socialist mood. To a considerable extent that was a reaction against the upsurge of the democratic movements of the 1960s. Those were the principal factors in the weakening of the Democratic Party's influence and the Republican Party's victory. The new alignment of the political and social forces was a sign of growing socio-political and ideological contradictions in the USA.

#### The Expansion of the Links Between AFL-CIO Leaders and the Republican Administration

After the defeat in the 1968 election campaign, the internal strife in the Democratic Party intensified, and liberal elements in it became more active. All of this worried the AFL-CIO leaders. In an interview with *The New York Times*, George Meany stated that the Democratic Party had "disintegrated" and was "becoming a captive of left-wing extremists"<sup>1</sup>.

George Meany obviously exaggerated the influence of the New Left in the Democratic Party. But his position was evidence of animosity of union bureaucrats toward many Democratic senators and representatives speaking out against the war in Vietnam. *The New York Times* wrote, "now that Richard Nixon has become the chief exemplar of the same approach to the American involvement in Indochina, Mr.

Meany has shifted to the Republican President the applause he once gave Mr. Johnson on the war"<sup>1</sup>.

As a result of the 1968 election, the unions faced an administration formed by a party traditionally hostile to workers' organizations and one which had never tied its hands by any obligations to the unions. However, directly after the change of the administration there was a rapprochement between the new administration and the AFL-CIO leadership. Both sides stated their desire for businesslike cooperation. The AFL-CIO leadership fully approved of Nixon's aggressive foreign policy and his objective of establishing "law and order" through persecution of democratic organizations of the Left. Soon "a correct if not overtly cordial relationship" emerged between Nixon and Meany<sup>2</sup>.

To win Meany's sympathies, Nixon invited him to parties, played golf with him, and briefed him on domestic and foreign matters. When Nixon sent US troops to Cambodia in May 1970, there was a wave of mass protests throughout the country, but "Good Soldier Meany" approved of that act of the President of the United States. "It is unmistakably clear," said Meany of the President, "that he made his decision on the basis of his clear obligation as commander-in-chief to protect American servicemen ... he acted with courage and conviction ... he should have the full support of the American people."<sup>3</sup> But the majority of union members never trusted Nixon.

The early 1970s were marked by the beginning of a profound socio-political crisis of American society. Broad masses of the people were increasingly dissatisfied with the costly and hopeless war in Vietnam, and the unwillingness of the ruling circles to use the enormous sums spent on military purposes for the solution of the most urgent social and economic issues. That crisis manifested itself in an unprecedented growth of the anti-war movement, mass anti-government actions, racial conflicts, and more acute struggle within the bourgeois parties. The aggressive foreign policy of the United States, continuation of the cold war against the socialist countries, and interference in the internal affairs of

<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*, September 2, 1970, p. 32M.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Joseph C. Goulden, *Op. cit.*, p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 404-405.

other nations came into an ever sharper conflict with the real possibilities of American imperialism.

Using the reactionary union bureaucracy as their cat's paw, the Republicans tried to expand their influence among workers. Their hopes were stirred up by the action of a chauvinistically-minded group of New York hard hats in May 1970 in support of the war in Vietnam. That action delighted the reactionary circles, the monopolies and the bourgeois ideologues in their pay. Republican leaders believed that they would be able to win over the broad masses of workers on their side by pushing into the forefront such issues as establishing "law and order", keeping in check the rebellious students and the opponents of the war in Vietnam. They hoped to exploit the attitudes of conservatism, "patriotism", and animosity toward "extremists" and left-wing liberals in the Democratic Party.

But these hopes were dashed. The overwhelming majority of the US working class rejected the reactionary domestic and aggressive foreign policy of the Nixon administration. According to a Gallup pole, the "working man" stood firm in the Democratic ranks. Economic issues have always been and still remain the key to any strategy of both parties addressed to the working class.

The failure of Nixon's government was due in the first place to his economic policy with its high interest rates, the effort to end inflation at the expense of the working class, and encouragement of the employers' offensive against the proletariat's living standards. To this should be added the economic recession, growing unemployment, falling real wages, and difficulties arising in the renewal of a number of major collective agreements in connection with the intervention of government agencies. Nixon's bill on compulsory arbitration in all types of transport, resolutely and unanimously denounced by the unions, was also an important factor. Nixon's "new economic policy" drew a sharp protest.

The *New York Times* wrote of a number of factors which caused social instability, such as the dramatic growth of unemployment, absence of balance between the different economic sectors, racial conflicts, the alienation of intellectuals and young people, and the impasse in the relations between the legislative and the executive branches.

On the eve of the 1972 election, the whole series of the complex problems remained unsolved. This situation led to

acute conflicts within the bourgeois parties and an active realignment of the political forces. After the 1968 defeat, there were plans for restructuring the Democratic Party's organization and a rapprochement with the democratic movements of young people, Blacks, and Hispanics. Turbulent debates were held on the content of the economic side of the election platform. Under pressure from the Democratic rank and file, with the mass movements on the upsurge, Senator George McGovern was nominated the party's presidential candidate in 1972.

His original program contained quite a few radical proposals: withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, considerable cuts in military spending and switching the funds to social security, and increased corporate taxes and taxes on individuals in the higher income brackets. The average voter was also impressed by the promise to guarantee a minimal income for each poor family from government sources. McGovern promised the unions to get allocations to the tune of \$10,000 million to create new workplaces in the industry, and to abolish, within 90 days, control over wage rises.

McGovern's platform reflected the views of part of the bourgeoisie intent on overcoming the socio-political crisis and on attaining stable economy and social relations. That group hoped to quell the mass movements of social protest through certain socio-economic concessions. It counted especially on a return to the "accord" between the Democratic Party and the unions and on keeping workers' organizations outside the flood of radical ideas sweeping through the country.

The McGovern platform found broad support among the forces that had actively opposed the government's policy for several years already—anti-war protesters, civil rights fighters, young people (students in the first place), and the underprivileged strata of American society.

McGovern's nomination was a remarkable feature of the 1972 election campaign. He was strongly supported by a number of centrist-democratic unions. In all, 55 unions came out in his support. They hoped that his election would undermine the anti-labor legislation and the government would be more favorable toward the unions in the settlements of labor disputes. A national "Labor for McGovern" committee was set up. Thousands of delegates from different unions sup-

ported his candidacy at a conference in Saint Louis in 1972. McGovern's intention to withdraw troops from Vietnam and to stop US aggression there was especially emphasized. The "Support McGovern to Beat Nixon" slogan was very popular with the rank-and-file unionists. It is characteristic that McGovern had "one of the best COPE (Committee on Political Education, AFL-CIO main political body) ratings in the Senate—100 per cent in 1970 and 93 per cent in 1972".<sup>1</sup>

It was no accident that McGovern was nominated the Democratic Party's presidential candidate. After the 1968 defeat, the influence of the democratic, student and Black movements had increased in that party, while certain changes in the party rules enabled them to be well represented at the convention. At the same time many reactionary bosses like Chicago's Mayor Daley were not sent to the convention at all; 80 per cent of the delegates attended a convention for the first time.

McGovern's nomination alarmed the reactionary leaders of the AFL-CIO who were dead against any radical changes at all. McGovern was declared to be a "dangerous radical" and a "hidden enemy" of the unions. The hidebound union bureaucracy was frightened by the support McGovern enjoyed among the poorest strata of the population, the Blacks and Hispanics.

For the first time in 40 years a Democratic candidate was not supported by the AFL-CIO top leadership. The Federation decided not to lend its backing to either of the presidential candidates. Many unions, including some of the AFL-CIO boards in the individual states, opposed that decision, but the Federation's leaders ignored the wishes of the locals.

In an interview granted to the *US News & World Report*, George Meany said that, although the AFL-CIO leadership was against Nixon's economic policy and endorsed strikes, it was ready to recognize binding arbitration on condition that union interests were respected. He pointed out considerable differences between the unions and President Nixon, although he himself had "a very fine relationship with him". Meany did not want to see him defeated "by somebody who is advocating surrender" in Vietnam<sup>2</sup>. Nixon attempted a flirtation with the unions which had lost all trust in him. James Hodgson, Ni-

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, September 1972, pp. 11-18.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, February 21, 1972, pp. 31, 34.

xon's Labor Secretary, declared that wage and price control was a forced measure that the government was going to get rid of as soon as it could<sup>1</sup>.

Relying on the support of the state and using the political backwardness, inertia and chauvinistic attitudes of some union members, the proimperialist group of union bureaucrats (Meany, Fitzsimmons, and others) practically did a great service to the rightist forces. The political neutrality and political pragmatism of which the AFL-CIO chairman spoke as the principles determining the Federation's attitude to political parties and their candidates during the 1972 elections, signified in actual fact their profound hostility to the progressive elements in American society.

The 1972 election campaign again showed the preferences of the Meany group for the reactionary forces in the two-party system. Their cooperation assumed an unprecedented scope during the campaign. Frank Fitzsimmons, President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, declared that in these troubled times Americans needed a president who had Nixon's boldness and courage. Nixon keenly appreciated Fitzsimmons's splitting tactics in the union movement, his militarist and chauvinistic positions, and called him a true labor leader.

Fifty six per cent of all industrial workers eligible to vote took part in the 1972 presidential election. Their votes were equally divided between McGovern and Nixon. Nixon was mostly supported by highly paid workers who did not want the government to expand the social programs for the upkeep of those who were, in their view, failures; 62 per cent of low paid voters and 89 per cent of Blacks voted for McGovern<sup>2</sup>. Meany's group expected its neutrality in the 1972 election to be rewarded by a fresh compromise with the administration. After reelection, Nixon attended a sitting of the AFL-CIO Executive Board on February 8, 1973, where he was given a grand reception. The conservative union leaders lent their support to further moves in his economic policy. Meany expressed his approval of Nixon's firmness in waging the Vietnam war<sup>3</sup>. Even Joseph Beirne, President of the Communication Workers of

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 29, 1972, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, November 8, 1972, pp. 33-39.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

America, described the role of George Meany and of the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education subordinated to him to oppose McGovern's candidacy as betrayal of the working class interest<sup>1</sup>.

The new lines of cooperation between the Nixon administration and the AFL-CIO top leadership strengthened the conservative tendencies both in the socio-political life of society and in the union movement. The emerging compromise between Nixon and union bureaucracy in the socio-economic field led to the appointment of Peter Brennan, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of New York affiliated to the AFL-CIO and an avowed racist and chauvinist, US Secretary of Labor.

But the cooperation between AFL-CIO leaders and President Nixon was short-lived. The government's economic policy, which began with a wage freeze and followed it up with wage restrictions, was the first blow to that cooperation. The unions were also indignant about the violations of the Constitution by Nixon and his entourage, which led to the impeachment. Meany had to consider the workers' mood. However, it was not Watergate or the President's anti-labor law that irritated Meany: he mainly objected to the transition from the policy of confrontation with the Soviet Union to the policy of negotiations. *American Federationist* wrote that Nixon must leave not only because of the ruinous economic policy but also because of the moves he had made toward improving relations with the Soviet Union.

Gerald Ford, Nixon's successor as President, was not supported by the unions, as he implemented an obviously anti-labor policy.

### A Return to Supporting the Democratic Party

In 1976, Jimmy Carter, the Democratic candidate, won the presidential election and moved to the White House. The Democrats won at a time when the unions and other mass organizations were highly critical of the socio-economic situation in the USA. In 1976, the consequences of the 1974-1975 economic crisis and of Watergate were still acutely

<sup>1</sup> See *Daily World*, November 18, 1972.

felt. The disclosure of the activities of the FBI and the CIA and of corruption in the top echelons of the state showed once again the decay of bourgeois democracy. The distrust of the people's masses toward the US political institutions grew.

The unions were also alarmed at the increased pressure from the monopolies encouraged by the Republican administration. *The Nation* wrote that the monopolies' offensive against the unions in recent years could only be compared in intensity with employers' attacks on infant unions in the early 1930s<sup>1</sup>. Describing the mood during the 1976 election campaign, *US News & World Report* wrote that the broad masses were angry and did not trust the government.

But there was no unity in the union movement on the choice of a Democratic presidential candidate whom the unions might support. Meany canvassed union approval of Senator Henry Jackson, well known for his militant anti-Communism and hostility toward the policy of détente and arms limitations. But this position of AFL-CIO leadership was only endorsed by six of the 109 unions affiliated to the Federation. The opposition to Jackson showed the extent to which the issues of consolidating peace and détente affected the political positions of the unions in the 1970s.

To prevent the AFL-CIO bosses thrusting their policy on the unions in the 1976 campaign, six of the politically most active organizations of that federation formed a coalition for the duration of the campaign. It included the association of machinists and aerospace workers, the American federation of state, county and municipal employees, the united electrical, radio and machine workers, the oil, chemical and atomic workers international union, communications workers union, and the union of workers in the applied arts. As is known, these unions had refused to carry out Meany's instructions in 1972 and supported McGovern.

The opposition of this coalition to Jackson's candidacy grew into open defiance of Meany's dictates. They disobeyed the AFL-CIO rule to the effect that the individual unions must hand over their funds to the political organs of the Federation. The unions mentioned earlier were joined by three

<sup>1</sup> See *The Nation*, September 9, 1978, p. 197.

independent organizations: the United Auto Workers, the United Mine Workers of America, and the National Education Association.

In the 1976 campaign, the overwhelming majority of the unions supported the Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter, who won them over with generous promises to solve the most acute problems of American society that were of the greatest concern to the working people. The unions' attitude to Carter was also largely determined by his promises to continue the policy of détente and to cut the US military budget by five to seven thousand million dollars. Jerry Wurf said that the unions conducted the election campaign on a wide scale because they felt "strongly that this nation is in very serious trouble domestically and internationally"<sup>1</sup>.

At the same time the unions believed Carter's election platform to be vague and imprecise. The attitude of the left wing of the union movement toward Carter was guarded and even critical because of his attempts to campaign against McGovern in 1972 and to interfere in the investigation of the Watergate affair, and because of his vacillating position on abolishing a number of clauses of the Taft-Hartley Act. As *The New York Times* observed, the unions were prepared to embrace Carter "not because they know and trust him—by and large, they describe him as an unknown political quantity—but because they perceive no good alternative to backing the Democratic nominee"<sup>2</sup>.

Realizing that he would not be able to get Jackson nominated presidential candidate, Meany refused to take part in the Democratic Convention. This sort of thing had never before happened since the founding of the AFL-CIO in 1955.

The unions supporting Carter's candidacy sent 418 delegates to the convention, or one-fifth of the total. During the convention they refused to cooperate with the COPE leadership headed by its National Director Alexander E. Barkan and his deputy John Perkins. Leonard Woodcock, leader of the United Auto Workers, declared that a powerful coalition had to be created in support of the Dem-

ocratic Party and its presidential candidate Carter. This vigorous advocacy of Carter's cause by Woodcock was highly appreciated by the new President: Woodcock was appointed US Ambassador to China.

The division between the views of most unions and the AFL-CIO Chairman on one of the most vital issues of the unions' political activity—whom to support at the polls—increased the unions' disapproval of the policy of the Federation's leadership. During the 1976 campaign, leaders of several AFL-CIO unions declared that the Federation's bosses were out of step with the rank and file, and that US labor movement had to shake off its lethargy and gain new strength. As A. Raskin, *The New York Times* labor observer, said in the summer of 1976, even Meany's closest associates would have liked him to retire from the chairmanship of the AFL-CIO.

To avoid complete isolation, Meany declared after Carter's nomination as Democratic candidate that the AFL-CIO would support him.

At the 1976 polls, 65 per cent of union members voted for Carter (with only 33.3 per cent of all those eligible to vote supporting him). He was backed by the mass movements—Blacks, other ethnic minorities, organizations fighting inflation and price rises, for reducing unemployment, increasing aid to the needy, women's liberation, and peace. These movements hoped that if Carter should win at the polls, Congress with its Democratic majority would pass laws implementing Carter's election promises. The mass movements' support was one of the most important factors which ensured his victory. As one newspaper wrote, Carter's victory was due to a broad coalition of workers and national minorities in which the unions played the decisive role. In some areas, a very high percentage of workers voted for Carter. In Philadelphia, for instance, it was 83 per cent, in Detroit 90, in Pittsburgh, 82, and in Saint Louis, 77.5. The COPE mobilized 120,000 activists to campaign for Carter, and more than 80 million copies of various publications were distributed.

After the elections the AFL-CIO leadership went out of its way to establish friendly relations with the Carter administration. Meany stressed that the Americans had voted for a government with a new philosophy, one in which all

<sup>1</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, March 4, 1974, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, June 15, 1976, p. 1.

simple people are interested. He recommended the President to revive the Committee of Advisers on Labor Relations consisting of union and business representatives. Simultaneously Meany demanded an embargo on grain deals with the USSR and generally an end to trade relations with it. In his turn, Carter promised to enlarge his contacts with the AFL-CIO bosses.

### The Working People Oppose President Carter's Policy

Under the two-party system existing in the USA, union members voted in 1976 for the Democratic candidate who seemed the "lesser evil" to them than the Republican Gerald Ford. The union membership's vote was an important factor in Carter's victory.

But President Carter's socio-economic measures showed that his concern was in the first place for the interests of big business, and his attitude to the unions was no different from his predecessors', Nixon and Ford.

The anti-labor orientation of the Carter administration was most clearly manifested in the move to slow down the growth of inflation through decreased economic activity (which inevitably entailed growing unemployment) and reduction of federal spending on social programs. The left wing in the union movement became increasingly disaffected at the fact that, while cutting the social welfare budget, Carter proposed a program of sharply increasing US military spending. President Carter's labor policy led to growing discontent among the working people.

In assessing the significance of the decisions passed by Congress on Carter's energy program and his tax reform, the left liberal journal *The Progressive* wrote: "Tax and energy legislation enacted in the frantic final spasms of the Ninety-Fifth Congress represents a major shift in the Government's economic policy—a shift orchestrated by the Right and designed to benefit the rich."<sup>1</sup>

Carter's budget policy was another major departure from his pre-election promises. "For the first time in living memory," wrote *Business Week* in this connection, "a Dem-

ocratic President is proposing a budget that contains no spending for new social programs in the coming year."<sup>1</sup>

Carter's socio-economic policy inspired growing protest in the US union movement. Even Meany had to acknowledge that "Carter had betrayed his liberal supporters by developing the most conservative administration since Calvin Coolidge".<sup>2</sup>

Both the centrist and the left wing of the US union movement resolutely condemned Carter's socio-economic policy. United Auto Workers Chairman Douglas Fraser declared that the Carter administration was ineffective and could not get support in Congress for the legislation in which the unions were interested. Unless Carter changed his policies, Fraser warned, he'd be in difficulty during the 1980 campaign<sup>3</sup>. Left-wingers in the unions now called Carter "our Republican President".

At the December 1977 AFL-CIO Convention, Meany and his followers insisted on the military buildup in the USA and NATO. On other occasions they criticized Carter's foreign policy from right-wing positions, reproaching him, among other things, for neglect of "defending human rights" in other countries, for recognizing the Iranian government "too early" after the overthrow of the Shah, and for not acting decisively enough in Southeast Asia.

During the 1980 election campaign the centrist trade unions supported Edward Kennedy. Even Lane Kirkland, the new AFL-CIO chairman, already in the summer of 1979 was no longer prepared to support Carter's candidacy. A year later, Edward Kennedy had the backing of 28 influential unions with some eight million members, that is, nearly a third of all organized workers. Kennedy's followers were spearheaded by the influential United Auto and Aerospace Workers. That was why Kennedy hoped to be nominated at the Democratic Convention even after his defeat during the primaries.

After Kennedy was defeated at the Democratic Convention in August 1980, and Carter was nominated presidential candidate, practically all US unions, including the AFL-CIO leadership, declared their support for the latter.

<sup>1</sup> *Business Week*, January 29, 1979, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, January 22, 1979, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, September 11, 1978, p. 87.

<sup>1</sup> *The Progressive*, December 1979, p. 7.



That was not at all because the unions approved of his policy. The election platform of the Republican Party and its candidate Ronald Reagan obviously promised to take a different approach to social and economic problems. It envisaged no changes in the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act, and would extend the anti-trust laws to cover the unions. Even the AFL-CIO's reactionary leaders realized that Reagan's victory would be a hard blow for the unions. But the situation in 1980 was much more complicated than in 1976. Most union members, just as the numerous ethnic groups, were dissatisfied with the results of Carter's socio-economic policy. Americans enter the 1980 campaign disaffected, disappointed, and desperate, wrote the *US News & World Report*.

Sensitive to the mood of the broad workers' masses, Carter made an attempt to win them over to his side again. In 1979, he appeared at the conventions of the AFL-CIO and a number of unions, promising his support to all their demands; those promises, however, merely inspired ironical comment.

Political observers predicted that Carter would not get some of the votes which ensured his victory in 1976, and in the first place the votes of workers in the industrial states many of whom would support Reagan. When the election day was still several weeks away, it was clear that Carter had lost much of the labor support, compared to 1976. But union leaders did all they could to bring about Carter's victory.

The last few campaigns show that the role of the unions fell. Millions of workers stayed away from the polls in 1980, many of them union members. It was for the first time in the past 92 years that a Democratic candidate was not re-elected.

The Democrats were defeated at a time of a violent upsurge in militarism and chauvinism, for which Carter himself was largely responsible. Against this background, prominent liberal Democrats, such as McGovern, Church and others, looked like "dangerous pacifists". For the first time since 1954, the party lost its majority in the Senate, and its majority in the House of Representatives dwindled considerably.

During the Carter presidency, the administration openly implemented conservative policies both at home and abroad. The consequences of that policy especially affected the people in the low income brackets, so that the voters now saw little

difference between the Democratic and the Republican parties. Enormous numbers of voters, 47 per cent, or 76 million Americans, came to the conclusion that it was no use taking part in the elections at all. Carter lost 18 per cent of the union vote (62 per cent in 1976 and 44 per cent in 1980), and 13 per cent of the liberal vote (70 per cent in 1976 and 57 per cent in 1980). But the fall was especially great among the low-income voters (56 per cent in 1976 and 29 per cent in 1980). These figures show better than anything else the conservative and anti-popular character of the Carter administration. Only the ethnic minorities mostly voted for Carter, but even in this category many voters simply failed to appear at the polls.

The reason for the defeat of the Democratic Party and the victory of the Republicans by no means lies in most Americans becoming more conservative and believing the slogans of the extreme Right. The unbridled slander campaign against communism and the Soviet Union was not without its effect, of course. But, first, Reagan received only 26 per cent of the votes of all Americans eligible to vote, and second, the overwhelming majority of Americans gave the conservatives no mandate to step up the arms race, to continue unprecedented military spending or to cut social security programs. It was because President Carter had implemented such a policy that most Americans had turned away from him.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the elections a union journal wrote that the working class and the unions must be ready for a hard fight with the conservative forces. President Reagan is an open defender of the wealthy, advocating a free hand for big business in its offensive against the working class. In foreign policy, the journal stressed, increased aggressiveness should be expected, with its threat of war.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the Republican administration's policy represented a further shift to the right, which means a tougher attitude to the unions, on economic issues, among others. President Reagan's first decrees—lifting the control over oil and fuel prices, revision of all spending on social programs for the purpose of cutting them while increasing military spending—pleased monopoly capital and brought new hardships to the working people. Reagan's very first foreign policy

<sup>1</sup> See *Political Affairs*, January 1981, pp. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> *UE News*, November 10, 1980, p. 3.

statements were in the spirit of the cold war at its worst. The unions' uneasiness about a further shift to the right in domestic and foreign policy was well-founded.

The AFL-CIO, which had supported Carter during the election campaign, promptly changed its orientation and openly proposed cooperation with Reagan. On behalf of the unions, Kirkland promised support for the existing political and economic system and the two-party bourgeois establishment. The AFL-CIO bosses endorsed Reagan's frenetic campaigns against the USSR and Poland.

Simultaneously, the reactionary union bureaucracy stepped up its pressure on the active elements in the labor movement, mostly at the local level. The AFL-CIO chairman made threatening speeches against the leaders of those unions which insisted on breaking off relations with bourgeois parties.

#### **The Evolution and Contradictions of American Social Democracy. Its Relations with the Unions**

The ideological and theoretical arsenal, the organizational structure and the character of the activities of American social democracy underwent serious changes in the 1960s and 1970s. That evolution of the ideological dogmas and practical activity of the socialist party was not an abstract or isolated phenomenon but an organic part of the political history of the USA. The ebb and flow of the socialist movement in the USA, the organizational processes and delimitation of various trends—all of this reflects the Social Democrats' response to the most vital domestic and external aspects of the development of American society. The changes taking place in social democracy itself are evidence of profound contradictions in its ideology and policy, and its increasing inadequacy to the modern demands of the class and general democratic struggle in the USA.

American social democracy violently reacted against progressive socio-economic changes in the world, showing extreme intolerance toward the growing might of the socialist system. Two tendencies, right-wing opportunist and left-wing liberal, are becoming ever more clearly distinguishable in the social democratic movement in the USA. The growing acuteness of the social contradictions in American society, its

ideological and political crisis are accompanied by a further shift to the right of the main body of social democracy, its rejection of the ideological principles and traditional directions of political activity that were characteristic of Eugene Debs's party.

The unconditional loyalty of right-wing social democracy to the AFL-CIO bosses has developed now into a direct alliance, close cooperation and even organizational merging of their apparatus. That alliance also determines the orientation toward the liberal-centrist section of the Democratic Party with its ties with the union bureaucracy. But it also means the involvement of right-wing social democracy in the cooperation with the party political machine which implements the bourgeois labor policy, the machine with which the AFL-CIO leadership has long had close and firm ties. At the same time a small group split from the mainstream of social democratic movement, which, though it shares the anti-communist postulates of the majority, seeks at the same time direct contacts both with the left-wing liberal forces and with various democratic movements.

The socialist movement in the USA, represented by the Socialist Party, has traditionally lacked in clearcut organizational unity and, more importantly, in a firm ideological basis. The sectarian positions with regard to the unions controlled by conservative leaders were an important factor in the gap between the Socialists and the main body of the working class. For a long time, liberal intellectuals who followed Norman Thomas's reformist line, dominated US social democracy. The Socialist Party last took part in elections as an independent political party in 1956. Its presidential candidate Darlington Hoopes got only 2,121 votes then<sup>1</sup>.

After that crushing election defeat, the party withdrew from election campaigns and concentrated on working out the doctrines of the so-called humanist or ethical socialism. At the same time the party began to develop links with the unions, although it was aware of the betrayal of workers' interests by the union bosses. Norman Thomas, Chairman of the Socialist Party, wrote that he believed in cooperation with

<sup>1</sup> *The Western Socialist*, Boston, No. 1, 1973, p. 18.

the unions, which had enormous potential<sup>1</sup>. In the 1950s, the Socialist Party had not yet capitulated before the AFL-CIO bosses, and it was no accident that Thomas spoke of "democratic unions", referring to the need for changes in the US union movement, and above all for a revision of the leadership's open policy of class collaboration.

After the 1956 election, the Socialist Party admitted its complete defeat in the competition with the bourgeois parties. It began a rapprochement with the Democratic Socialist Federation which had split from the Socialist Party as early as in the 1930s. Both the Socialist Party and the Democratic Socialist Federation had their representatives in the Socialist International. In 1957, they reached an agreement on joint representation. Thus began their growing unity, which played an important role in the development of a new crisis in the party, during which many members of the Socialist Party either were expelled or resigned their membership themselves. The leadership of the party, fearing a split, did not permit factional conferences during elections.

In the 1970s, after Norman Thomas's death, the right-wing elements in the party gave up any attempt at criticism of the procapitalist union bureaucracy and even of the domestic and foreign policy of the US ruling circles. The formal union of the Socialist Party and the Democratic Socialist Federation in 1972 resulted in the Socialist Party's loss of political identity, and doctrines of "humanist" and "democratic" socialism became instruments in the service of the AFL-CIO conservative leadership. That became particularly clear during the 1972 election campaign.

Following the AFL-CIO, the leadership of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation refused to support the Democratic candidate McGovern backed by the national minorities, radical students and a great number of the unions. That aggravated the struggle within the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation on the most important economic and social issues; on October 23, 1972, Michael Harrington resigned as national co-chairman of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation. He accused the

<sup>1</sup> *What Are the Answers? Norman Thomas Speaks to Youth*, Compiled and Edited by Bettina Peterson and Anastasia Toufexis, Ives Washburn, Inc., New York, 1970, pp. 45, 55.

party's leadership of the departure from the socialist ideals and opposition to the liberal and left-wing forces in the Democratic Party.

In March 1972, when Harrington became co-chairman of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation, the national committee of that organization was the scene of hot disputes on the most acute issues: the war in Vietnam, and the relations with different elements in the Democratic Party and with the unions. Harrington hoped then that the Socialists would become a serious force in the 1972 election campaign and a focus for the forces of the left-wing Democrats. But the national committee of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation rejected McGovern as presidential candidate and cooperation with the New Politics liberal grouping.

The Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation was sharply divided on foreign policy. The national committee of this organization supported all government moves in foreign policy, including its backing for the fascist regimes in Greece and Spain. The national committee ignored the need for vigorous peace campaigning. It refused to speak out for a speedy withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam.

But the most acute differences of opinion within the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation were on the issue of relations with the AFL-CIO leadership. Harrington insisted that the policy of the AFL-CIO leaders calling for "neutrality" during the 1972 elections was all wrong. He believed that Socialists could only fulfill their function if they retained their independent and critical honesty within the union movement. Socialists did not bring the unions great numbers or huge financial resources, he wrote, but they brought their ideas. It was tragic, Harrington emphasized, that Socialists in America often counterposed themselves to the official labor movement. But it would be just as tragic if, by way of overcompensation, they became uncritical apologists for one wing of the movement: they must not cut themselves off from various directions and tendencies in the union movement, they must not commit themselves only to the AFL-CIO policies ignoring the movements of various groups of the poorer strata and ethnic minorities.

Jerry Wurf, a prominent union leader and Harrington's associate, also sharply criticized the shift to the right of most members of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist

Federation's national committee. The "neutrality" during the 1972 election campaign on which the AFL-CIO leaders had insisted, had resulted, in Wurf's view, in the weakening of McGovern's positions. Wurf emphasized that support for such conservatives as Chicago's Mayor Daley or Nelson Rockefeller, Governor of the state of New York, was motivated by a desire to justify reactionary policies and the aggressive war in Vietnam.

Further drift to the right led to a reorganization of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation: in December 1973, its convention decided, by 72 votes to 34, to form the Social Democrats, USA. The majority group led by James S. Glaser and Irwin Sull contended that "the change would be realistic and helpful". The minority, headed by Michael Harrington and Samuel Friedman, opposed the reorganization on the ground that it involved "loss of philosophy and tradition".<sup>2</sup>

This event was a culmination of tendencies of long standing in the American socialist movement. The convention elected as co-chairmen Bayard Rustin and Charles Zimmerman, union leaders. James Glaser was elected first vice-chairman, with three other vice-chairmanship posts going to Dr. Samuel Silverberg, publisher of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, Paul Feldman, editor of the social democratic publication *New America*, and Samuel H. Friedman, a former vice-presidential candidate of the Socialist Party.<sup>3</sup>

*Socialist Affairs*, the organ of the Socialist International, observed with satisfaction that the reorganization of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation into the Social Democrats, USA was a logical conclusion of the previous development of the American social democracy. The convention that approved these changes appealed for a mass social democratic movement in the USA, for cooperation with liberals, and for persistent action against communist ideas within the USA and on the international arena. Joan Sull, National Secretary of the new organization, said the change of name represented "no substantive change in our commitment to the building of a democratic socialist society in America".

<sup>1</sup> *The Western Socialist*, No. 1, 1973, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See *Socialist Affairs*, London, January-February 1973, p. 23.

She added: "Our organization stopped running candidates many years ago. Today we support major party candidates who indicate a commitment to moving the country in the direction of social democracy."<sup>1</sup>

The dropping of the word "party" from the name was intended to attract the adherents of bourgeois parties and to help make the Social Democrats, USA, a mass political organization. A resolution of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation Convention read: "...the continued use of the word 'party' had been misleading" and identified in mass consciousness with communism and totalitarianism.<sup>2</sup> Michael Harrington, leader of the minority, said in this connection that the change formalized by the convention were something more serious than just a change of a name, and that the desire to be an organization more acceptable to the AFL-CIO leadership would lead to profound alterations in the very essence of the socialist party, in its ideological and political principles.

The Communist Party of the USA thus evaluated the reorganization of the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation: "This scheme came to a head in 1972 when the right wing of the Socialist Party, led by Albert Shanker, Bayard Rustin, Tom Kahn, Charles Zimmerman and several others, split that organization wide open and formed Social Democrats, USA (SDUSA). One of their first acts was to proclaim themselves as the 'vanguard of anti-Communism'.<sup>3</sup> The constituent convention of the SDUSA called the world Communist movement "the greatest enemy of socialism today", and appealed for actively combating Communist influence in the labor movement of Latin America, Asia and Africa.

The convention also declared that "democratic socialism" in the USA could only be built through a close union with the AFL-CIO and a policy of rapprochement with the liberals from the Democratic Party.<sup>4</sup> In an appraisal of the decisions of the constituent convention of the SDUSA, *Daily World* on November 28, 1972 wrote that this position of Right-wing

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Western Socialist*, No. 1, 1973, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Political Affairs*, September 1975, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> See *Socialist Affairs*, No. 1, 1973, pp. 23, 24.

social democracy was a fig leaf covering the reactionary essence of the policy of Meany and his associates.

Closer union between right-wing Socialists and the conservative group of union leaders was founded on their common stance against radical democratic movements, hostility toward the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and support for the aggressive foreign policy of the USA.

After the split in the Socialist Party—Democratic Socialist Federation and the separation of the left wing led by Harrington, the SDUSA became a real mouthpiece for the conservative AFL-CIO leadership. The leaders of the SDUSA maintained that they had succeeded in correcting the “historical injustice” by bridging the gap between social democracy and the mass movement. In reality, they gave up all reliance on the working masses and formed an ideological and political alliance with the top union bureaucracy for purposes that are hostile to the true interests of the proletariat. Right-wing social democracy formed close links with open advocates of capitalism—union leaders of the Meany type. SDUSA leaders were shameless enough to award Meany a “Eugene V. Debs Award”<sup>1</sup>.

SDUSA leaders took an increasing part in the implementation of state-monopoly capitalism's domestic and foreign policy. Right-wing social democracy in America became a personification of open opportunism. Gus Hall wrote: “Opportunism is capitulation and accommodation to the class enemy. It is an avoidance of struggle. It is a policy of non-confrontation. On many levels it is a betrayal of the interests of the working class.”<sup>2</sup>

This was especially clearly demonstrated by the SDUSA convention in September 1974. It stressed the need for further expansion of organizational and business links with the AFL-CIO for the purpose of fighting communism. The principal resolution of the convention criticized the policy of détente, and demanded that the USA should link its trade relations with the USSR with direct interference in its internal affairs. The convention showed a further

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, May 1979, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Gus Hall, *Imperialism Today. An Evaluation of Major Issues and Events of Our Time*, International Publishers, New York, 1972, p. 253.

growth in the SDUSA's subservience to the reactionary union bosses and its withdrawal from mass democratic movement<sup>1</sup>. It was declared at the convention that Social Democrats “did not present a blueprint for socialism in America”, as blueprints came “from the drawing board of architects or from the pens of Utopian philosophers, not from a socialist movement”<sup>2</sup>.

Right-wing Social Democrats tried to justify in every way the actions of the AFL-CIO conservative leadership headed by Meany, declaring that “the American labor movement ... in fact ... is the one mass social democratic force in American life. Its program is social democratic in content if not in name...” The role of American socialists was to “help carry through a political strategy... educating new generations of socialists”<sup>3</sup>. The policy of class partnership implemented by the union bureaucracy was now given a pseudoradical social democratic verbal camouflage. That symbiosis of Gompersism and rightist social democratic ideology was called Milk and Water Socialism by the *American Socialist*.

Meany was not unwilling to play up to the social democratic leaders' demagoguery. In connection with the program of “democratic socialism” he said that he did not know what socialism meant, although he had read a great deal about it; if socialism meant establishment of a democratic system and a republican form of government, then the US already had that; if it was a question of providing justice for workers and farmers and developing the existing economic system, then he was interested in that kind of socialism.

Right-wing Social Democrats strove for important posts in the AFL-CIO hierarchy, trying to penetrate the structure of the Democratic Party through the unions, and win respect among bourgeois liberals. Henry Winston said of the right-wing Social Democrats that it “is the main recruiting ground today for Meany's trade union lieutenants”, and that it “is in open war, not alone against the Harrington grouping, but against any independent movement based on class struggle in general and the anti-monopoly movement in particular”<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See *Socialist Affairs*, November-December 1974, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Political Affairs*, September 1975, p. 13.

To achieve a better coordination of the activities of the AFL-CIO and SDUSA, Meany named Tom Kahn, a prominent figure in the SDUSA, as his Administrative Assistant and ideological adviser. Hundreds of right-wing Social Democrats moved into important positions in the AFL-CIO. Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers and vice-chairman of the AFL-CIO, also holds a responsible position in the SDUSA. That out-and-out racist and anti-Sovietist uses union funds to finance anti-Communist campaigns and sends "lecturers" to various countries of the world<sup>1</sup>.

Albert Shanker pitched into the hysterical anti-Soviet campaign unleashed by the Carter administration; he took an active part in anti-Kampuchean demonstrations and the spiteful propaganda campaign in connection with the events in Afghanistan<sup>2</sup>. The rank-and-file members of that federation denounced the policy of their leadership. A leaflet by the United Action Caucus revealed, among other things, that Shanker, on March 18 in Boston, spoke before a group of admirals and generals of the Pentagon and businessmen, discussing what he termed organized labor's weakening support for a strong defense<sup>3</sup>. It is hardly surprising that opposition to the top leaders is growing in the American Federation of Teachers.

Many other leaders of the SDUSA are racists. Its chairman Bayard Rustin heads the Building and Construction Trades Council of New York which openly practices discrimination against Blacks and other national minorities. Together with Norman Hill, associate director of the F. Randolph Institute studying the participation of Black Americans in labor movement, Rustin brainwashes Black union leaders in the spirit of right-wing Socialists' ideas. The AFL-CIO COPE is headed by Alexander E. Barkan, right-wing Social Democrat. That committee does everything it can to interfere in the unions' independent political activity.

The SDUSA leadership is not just racist, it is fiercely Zionist, supporting all of Israel's aggressive actions and engaging in continual sabotage against the Palestine liberation

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> See *AFL-CIO News*, January 5, 1980, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> See *Daily World*, July 18, 1979, p. 5.

movement and all the international organizations which back it. In 1979, Carl Gershman, representing the Social Democrats, USA, sharply objected to inviting PLO representatives to a Socialist International congress. He said that such an invitation would be a "denial of the national rights of the state of Israel"<sup>1</sup>.

Right-wing Social Democrats oppose détente, peaceful co-existence, and the policy of disarmament, and support all Pentagon and NATO plans. They condemned the victory of the revolution in Portugal, which they viewed as a serious threat to NATO and US security.

At the 1976 election, right-wing Social Democrats supported Carter. They used the AFL-CIO to push into his election platform certain demands aimed against détente. They also lent great support to the militant Zionist and reactionary Daniel Moynihan in the Senate elections in the state of New York. Particularly active in this respect were Shanker and other leaders of the American Federation of Teachers.

The activities of the SDUSA and its growing alliance with the AFL-CIO leadership stimulated organizational unification of the left wing of the Socialist Party, USA rejecting such a policy. In 1973, Michael Harrington and the union leaders supporting him (Jerry Wurf, David Seiden, Patrick Gorman and others) founded the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). The Committee has more than 70 locals in 30 states. In its negative attitude to the Communist Party USA, it differs little from the SDUSA, but at the same time they disagree on a number of important issues. Leaders of several major unions collaborate with the Harrington grouping. Thus William Winpisinger, leader of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, is vice-president of the DSOC<sup>2</sup>. The United Auto Workers and several other unions also have contacts with that committee.

The Harrington group has also come out in support of the rank-and-file and the part of the union movement which opposes the AFL-CIO leadership's collaboration with employers. Recently, the DSOC has taken steps to expand its links with industrial unions. At the same time Harrington and his followers attach special significance to the so-called "new

<sup>1</sup> *Socialist Affairs*, May/June 1979, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Nation*, April 7, 1979, p. 360.



working class" which in their view includes the growing mass of service industry workers, employees and professionals.

Harrington and his grouping erroneously believe that skilled workers become bourgeois in character and lend unqualified support for the domestic and foreign policy of the US ruling circles.

Unlike the SDUSA, the DSOC supports détente. In his address to the 21st National Convention of the CPUSA Henry Winston emphasized the need for a differentiated approach to the SDUSA and the committee headed by Harrington. "The difference between Harrington and Meany-Shanker & Co. is important," said Henry Winston, "for the Harrington grouping represents a developing Left tendency of social democracy when compared with the Social Democrats, USA".<sup>1</sup> Despite the negative attitude of the DSOC to the CPUSA, the latter keeps trying to establish contacts with that committee and to organize joint actions in expanding a mass anti-monopoly movement.

Both wings of the American social democracy agitate within the Democratic Party. But there are essential differences between them in the approach to this task. The SDUSA holds the view that there is no need for an independent party of the working class, and that their task is to influence, in alliance with the AFL-CIO, the party of the reform, pushing it toward "democratic socialism". Right-wing Social Democrats oppose the liberal New Politics grouping headed by McGovern. Rustin, Podhoretz, Shanker and other SDUSA leaders have formed the so-called "Democratic majority coalition", which purged the Democratic Party's apparatus of McGovern's followers, and endeavored to replace McGovern by the Texas conservative millionaire Robert Strauss as the leader of that party.

The left wing of the Socialists headed by Harrington, on the contrary, supports the liberals in that party, and various left-and-centrist groupings and national minority movements connected with that party. The Organizing Committee is oriented toward those union leaders who would have liked to use liberal ideas to fill the vacuum created by a crisis of the "business unionism" doctrines, expanding the practices of

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, September 1975, p. 13.

social reformism and transforming the Democratic Party after the model of the British Labor Party—in the "national interest" of the USA.

Harrington's positions are very close to this orientation. In his book *Toward a Democratic Left* he proposed to reorganize the Democratic Party into "a majority party" uniting liberals, union members, the democratic movements of the ethnic minorities, youth and women's movements. The task of the Socialist Party, in Harrington's view, is to create "a majority party of the democratic Left" and to this end it is necessary "to seek to win the Democratic Party in such a way as to exclude its Right wing permanently".<sup>1</sup> In effect, this is a renewal of the traditional view of a democratic coalition without the Communists.

Harrington maintained that the DSOC must not be a sect, that its goal would be to win influence in mass left-wing movements. He laid primary stress on the links between "democratic socialism" and liberalism, on the basis of which American society would logically be transformed in the direction of socialism.<sup>2</sup> The political credo of Harrington and his grouping, as it is presented in the book *Socialism* (1972), is in fact a revival of the reformist doctrines of Norman Thomas, former chairman of the Socialist Party, USA. "There is in the United States today," wrote Harrington, "a class political movement of workers which seeks to democratize many of the specific economic powers of capital but does not denounce capitalism itself."<sup>3</sup> Socialism, in Harrington's view, will be achieved when the scientific and technological progress in the economy develops fully and poverty is done away with. That is only possible if the political movement of men and women with developed consciousness is capable of controlling technology.

According to Harrington, socialism is a system ensuring that the people's needs are satisfied under capitalism. He puts forward a Utopian idea of humanizing American capi-

<sup>1</sup> M. Harrington, *Toward a Democratic Left. A Radical Program for a New Majority*, Penguin Books Inc., Baltimore, Maryland, 1969, pp. 246, 273.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Nation*, New York, May 25, 1974, p. 651.

<sup>3</sup> M. Harrington, *Socialism*, Saturday Review Press, New York, 1972, p. 251.

talism, in which the worst vices of this exploiting social system are inherent. These vices can only be eliminated through liquidating the dominance of the monopolies in the economic and socio-political life and complete and radical transformation of society. Just as Utopian is Harrington's second proposal—establishing the people's control over production and activities of corporations through the setting up of a special public organ by the shareholders.

The main fault of such doctrines is the rejection of radical, revolutionary transformations, their orientation toward a gradual socialist transformation of capitalism through social reform. Harrington rejects class proletarian consciousness, substituting workers' democratic self-consciousness for it. Harrington's proposals concerning structural reforms intended to transform capitalism into socialism leave capitalist ownership intact. The transformation of capitalism into a "controllable and manageable system" must, according to Harrington, pass through the stages of "planned neocapitalism" and "affluent society" based on capitalist economy and social structure.

Like Walter Reuther, the leader of the left-wing Social Democrats proposes to concentrate the main mass of shares in the hands of the state, making capitalists "open their ledgers". The "socialization" of capital investment and of the functions of corporate property must be implemented through controlled taxation. Again, this program does not envisage liquidation of capitalist ownership of the means of production and the system of capitalist profits connected with it.

While the SDUSA has become the conservative union bosses' instrument and actually supports the existing state-monopoly system, the Harrington group assumes that its own variant of "democratic socialism" can only be attained through a coalition of liberals, "the new working class", the unions and ethnic minorities. The DSOC took an active part in a conference in March 1979 which represented the broadest sections of the working class and other social strata as well as of ethnic minorities who discussed ways of attaining unity in the struggle against the offensive of the reactionary forces.

Thus the DSOC endeavors to establish contacts with broad mass movements and make a contribution to the working out of programmatic democratic demands. Intending to win the sympathy of the broad masses of union members, this group

supports the idea of a mass workers' party based on the unions. But the Harrington group would not want this party to become the leading political force or to cooperate with the Communist Party in the struggle for the true ideals of socialism.

In the meantime the DSOC is, as Harrington puts it, a small socialist movement in the most anti-socialist country in the world. In a speech during a debate in New York, in April 1979, of union workers and of representatives of democratic and left-wing movements over the future of labor and socialism, Harrington expressed himself in favor of the unions founding an independent political party. Gus Hall also spoke during that debate, inviting Harrington to work jointly toward the founding of workers' party. But there was no reply to that proposal<sup>1</sup>.

The left-wing liberal Socialists of the USA headed by Harrington try to expand their links with that part of the European social democracy which supports the policy of peaceful coexistence and nuclear disarmament. Early in January 1981, a conference was held in Washington on "Eurosocialism and America: An International Exchange" sponsored by the Institute for Democratic Socialism, a sub-body of the DSOC. George Meyers, member of the Central Committee, CPUSA, was among those invited to the conference. The DSOC leaders also met prominent figures in the Socialist International—Willy Brandt, Olof Palme, Kalevi Sorsa and others, who came over to the USA after a Socialist International Congress in Madrid<sup>2</sup>.

The conference organized by the DSOC has many remarkable features. Two thousand came for that conference, although the number of DSOC members does not exceed four thousand<sup>3</sup>. Representatives of several unions took part in it, and William Winpisinger of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers made a speech sharply critical of the Reagan administration. Just as Harrington,

<sup>1</sup> See *Daily World*, April 6, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the DSOC supported the resolution of that conference calling for a policy of disarmament, while the right-wing Social Democrats, the SDUSA, declared their complete solidarity with the policy of the US government with its aggravation of international tension and unbridled anti-Sovietism. See *Daily World*, January 23, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> See *Political Affairs*, January 1981, p. 12.

he declared that "old liberalism" receded into the past and that a "democratic reconstruction of the economy" was needed, as well as vigorous efforts in the left wing of the Democratic Party aimed at changing in due course the organizational and political principles of that party.

Such proposals were in effect debatable and did not express a definite, clearcut organizational and ideological line of the US left Socialists. Proposals for a "democratic reconstruction" of the economy repeated the propositions set forth in Harrington's book *Socialism*. The DSOC suggests that gradual reforms must be the goal in the sphere of the economy, and gives up the idea of founding a broadly based mass party of the Left, insisting that neither the masses nor the liberal political leaders are ready for that.

However, the very fact of a national conference being held to discuss the "socialist principles" of the economic and socio-political development of the USA is undoubtedly remarkable in a situation where the ruling circles are stepping up a reactionary psychosis within the country and aggressive activity on the international scene. That conference is an indication of the growing anti-monopoly struggle and social discontent of the broad people's masses. It is for this reason that the CPUSA welcomed the DSOC's initiative in convening the conference. "The response by 2,000 activists to the conference called by the social democratic organizations," said Gus Hall, "is but another indication of the readiness of people to move."<sup>1</sup>

The processes within American social democracy are contradictory, unstable, and greatly affected by momentary factors. The prospects for the development of the left trend in US social democracy, as represented by the Organizing Committee, directly depend on the ability of that organization to overcome its negative attitude to the CPUSA and to join the struggle for a broad anti-monopoly front of the American people.

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, January 1981, p. 12.

### The Struggle for a Union with the Democratic Forces and for Independent Political Activity

The history of the USA abounds in glorious events in the struggle for maintaining and extending democratic rights, for the people's right to participate in the solution of national economic and political problems. "The American people," wrote Lenin, "have a revolutionary tradition which has been adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat."<sup>1</sup>

In their struggle with the agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class, the progressive forces in the US union movement made repeated attempts to found a broad union of democratic movements and to break out of the two-party bourgeois system. But there have been and still are a great many obstacles on the path toward the political activity of the working class independent of the bourgeois parties. "The class interests of the bourgeoisie inevitably give rise to a striving to confine the unions to petty and narrow activity within the framework of the existing social order, to keep them away from any contact with socialism."<sup>2</sup>

The most prominent role in this respect is played by the agents of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement, the reactionary union bureaucracy. There is no place in America, said Meany, for a party that preaches class struggle; we shall continue the policy initiated by Samuel Gompers. It is just as important that the majority of the working class, dissatisfied as it is with bourgeois politicians, have no political alternative of their own, largely due to their ideological and political weakness and the dominant influence of bourgeois ideology.

Pragmatic philosophy and political voluntarism of the reactionary union bosses were used by the bourgeois historians, sociologists and politologists to substantiate the idea of alleged apolitical attitudes of the US working class which is said to have no desire for fighting for profound social transformations. Right-wing reformist ideologues,

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Trade-Union Neutrality", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 466.

just as the followers of extreme left pseudorevolutionary theories, share in fact these views. The working class, wrote Professor Cox, is tied economically and ideologically to the American state-political system and sees it as an instrument for achieving its goals.

These conclusions are one-sided and biased. The active influence of bourgeois ideology and the long dominant position of the two-party bourgeois system were undoubtedly the main cause of the shortcomings in the ideological and political development that the working class has not yet overcome. It is a great force in the fight for the economic interests, but its main body is so far politically unorganized; the left-wing progressive sections in the mass workers' movement continually suffer harsh reprisals inflicted by the state organs. At the same time the top union leadership, the labor bureaucrats, are a most important instrument, among other means and methods, of implementing a bourgeois labor policy in the working class.

"It is a peculiarity of the American labor movement," wrote William Foster, "that the trade unions have no mass Labor Party, or other mass party. For many years past—for well over half a century, in fact,—they have concentrated their political work heavily upon voting for the policies and candidates of the two old bourgeois parties, Democratic and Republican, with the emphasis on the former."<sup>1</sup>

The following important circumstances should also be taken into account in assessing the specific factors that determine the narrowness of the working class's political consciousness and slow down the involvement of the working class and of its mass organizations, the unions, in political activity independent of the bourgeoisie.

First, the American proletariat is opposed by the imperialist bourgeoisie that is the strongest in the world and has at its disposal enormous economic, political and ideological means for splitting, corrupting and suppressing the working class. Second, the social policy of the American bourgeois state comprises exceptionally varied and flexible methods and means of holding the main body of the proletariat and the unions within the ideological and political

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, January 1959, p. 28.

orbit of capitalism, and of suppressing left, anti-capitalist elements. Third, union bureaucrats are doing all they can to make the masses believe the false premise that the establishment of a political party of the working class will be harmful to the economic struggle, that it will scare away the unions' friends from the two principal parties.

All these factors proved so effective that the American working class is incapable of rising above the bourgeois conceptions of the essence of the capitalist system. Under the spell of unionist illusions, it has been unable to assess correctly the positions of various classes, to understand who its friends are and who are those that betray its class interests.

However, along with serious obstacles in the political development of mass workers' movement, factors of quite an opposite nature are becoming ever stronger in the USA, those that lead to the consolidation of the proletariat's class strength and the deepening of its contradictions with the monopolies and the entire state-monopoly mechanism, factors fostering progressive tendencies in the workers' movement. It is becoming increasingly obvious that economic problems cannot be solved without a fight against the state-monopoly labor policy. The conflict between labor and capital objectively develops into political confrontation, and the task is becoming ever more vital of achieving a new alignment of the political forces and the role of the unions in the struggle for creating a union of all the sections of society subjected to growing exploitation and political oppression.

The tendencies for the working class's political activity independent of the bourgeoisie are making themselves felt in a steady, undeviating way.

At a conference of the union of which he is the leader, Reuther said that the anti-labor legislation could take away everything that the workers had gained through hard struggle. There are important problems that go beyond collective agreements, problems which can only be solved in the sphere of political relations.

An important factor in the politicization of the working class movement is the development of the activity of the rank and file. The struggle for founding a workers' party in the state of Ohio is extremely characteristic in this respect. In the early 1960s, a committee of the unions for working to-

ward organizing a workers' party on a national scale was set up in the country's center of the steel industry, Pittsburgh. It was supported by the locals of a number of unions—steel workers, electrical workers, and others, who openly declared their break with the Democratic Party.

The AFL-CIO leadership managed to thwart a full-scale program of independent political activity: 205,681 votes were cast for such a program and 279,526 against. The close ties of many union leaders with the Democratic Party had their effect. In Youngstown, Kenton, Akron, Toledo, Lawrence, union representatives are members of the local committees of the Democratic Party, they are part and parcel of its apparatus. Union officials resolutely opposed breaking away from the Democratic Party. But that issue was not buried. In the 1960s and 1970s, the idea of independent political activity has been regularly debated both at AFL-CIO state conventions and in the separate unions.

The role of the working class in the general democratic struggle and the conflicts within labor organizations have become extremely vital issues. Bourgeois ideologues cannot conceal that political activization of the labor movement is a symptom of the dissatisfaction long felt in the working masses.

The involvement of the unions in active political strife is a vitally important issue, one that determines the future of the labor movement. More and more people in the USA come to realize that capitalist exploitation, monopoly arbitrariness, racism and many other social vices express the very nature of American society, and that they cannot be overcome by simply accelerating economic growth or somehow redistributing national wealth. The civil rights movement, wrote the magazine of the printers' union in April 1966, was able to mobilize hundreds of thousands to march on Washington; so why cannot labor unions activize their efforts in the same direction? The time has obviously come; for the idea of founding a workers' party is not new, but new circumstances have arisen which require its realization.

In early February 1967, a conference of the unions of the state of Illinois was held. Many of the 130 delegates spoke out in favor of founding an independent workers' party, emphasizing that vital problems of the working class could not be solved without it. The conference founded a political

organization, the State of Illinois Union for New Politics.

Political activization of the mass workers' movement was directly linked with the growing struggle of the rank-and-file union members. The national conference of the rank and file in 1970 set up a National Coordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy. At the committee's initiative, organizations of political nature were established which consisted of Blacks and workers of Mexican or Puerto Rican extraction, such as Labor Committee to Free Angela Davis, Labor Peace Committee, Labor Committee for a People's Tax Program, etc. *Labor Today*, the organ of the rank and file, called on the masses to fight inflation and unemployment through stepping up independent political activity.

In a speech at a convention of the independent union of electrical and radio workers, Arnold Miller, President of the United Mine Workers of America, stated that if the union movement joined forces with democratic movements, the workers would get a chance of electing a president from their own midst. Such declarations show just how deep the dissatisfaction with the bourgeois parties is even among some union leaders.

During the 1974-1975 economic crisis, there were huge rallies and demonstrations in Washington and the country's major cities, in which more than 100,000 took part, demanding changes in the government's economic policy and measures against inflation and unemployment. In 1981, there were even more powerful demonstrations against President Reagan's social policy.

Committees on political education have been set up in the AFL-CIO and many large unions. At best, however, they do little but explain to the union membership the election platforms of the bourgeois parties and lobby candidates from the bourgeois parties, that is, in fact they act as an appendage to their political machines. Reactionary union bureaucrats curb the use of such committees in the interests of expanding the movement for a political and ideological independence of the working class from the two-party system. However, the political guidelines of the AFL-CIO leadership are more and more often rejected due to the growing activity of the rank and file and the union officials at the local level. The activities of the unions' political organs, the committees on political edu-

cation, whose function is usually restricted to canvassing mass support for bourgeois politicians that suit the unions, began to go beyond the prescriptions of the union bureaucracy. In the locals, the COPE is becoming the focus for democratic forces in the unions, for the movement of the ethnic minorities, women, and young people. All of this fosters the development of the workers' class consciousness.

In his report to the 21st Convention of the CPUSA Gus Hall said that considerable sections of the union movement came to take into account the demands of their members and to unite their forces for political struggle. Dozens of millions are trying to find political solutions to the serious problems with which they have to deal.

In early 1977, a convention of the auto workers' union passed a resolution demanding the striking out from the union rules of clauses forbidding communists to hold responsible positions in the union. Similar resolutions were passed by several other unions, including the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (with one million members). The dissatisfaction with the "friends" from the Democratic Party is growing not only in the locals but also in the intermediate echelon of union leadership. Jack F. Henning, executive secretary of the California AFL-CIO, stated at the federation's convention the need for the formation of a labor party<sup>1</sup>. Al Grospiron, leader of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, also took a resolute stand: "We cannot depend on political parties and we should not tie ourselves to either party in this country," he said. "We have to make our programs and take our positions within the labor movement."<sup>2</sup>

The issue of founding a labor party figured prominently at the 43rd Convention of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (EU) in September 1978. Its resolution stated: "There is no solution to the political bind in which we find ourselves except the formation of a labor party—a party which unites workers, Blacks, Hispanics and other minorities, the women's movement, senior citizens, farmers, consumers, progressive intellectuals and others who are fed up with what is happening to our economic and political life."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *People's World*, August 20, 1977, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily World*, October 18, 1978, p. 3.

The crisis in the economy, and in the domestic and foreign policy of the US ruling circles during Carter's presidency entailed further politicization of the unions. On the initiative of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers a conference was held in Detroit in the fall of 1978 in which numerous unions and other working people's democratic organizations took part—30 unions and 75 various public organizations were represented in all, including Communists. The conference founded the Progressive Forces Alliance.

As *The Nation* wrote, "when a powerful labor union leader invites representatives from more than 100 Left-leaning organizations to consider with him the formation of a political alliance outside the Democratic Party, one might expect a rather remarkable congress"<sup>1</sup>. This coalition was a manifestation of a trend toward the formation of a left-centrist bloc, the establishment of an alliance between the radical forces of the country and the unions opposing the policy of class partnership.

One of the causes that contributed to the convening of that conference was the growing disappointment the masses feel about the two-party system, and their conviction that it is incapable of resolving the domestic problems and of satisfying the needs of the people. Although the conference did not provide answers to all the questions that are of such concern for the masses, it became an important move in the struggle of the unions and other public organizations for abandoning the two-party system. For the first time in recent years a forum of such scope considered the issue of founding a mass party opposing the bourgeois parties. Alvin E. Heaps, the International President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, sharply rejected the "lesser of evils" theory (that is, the view that workers should vote for the "friends" from the Democratic Party).

The 45th International Convention of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers held in September 1979 also laid great emphasis on the problem of the unions' independent political activity. Delegates from various states spoke out in favor of founding a mass labor par-

<sup>1</sup> *The Nation*, October 28, 1978, p. 430.



ty<sup>1</sup>. Jimmy Nelson, Local 506, stressed that "the only way a labor party is going to be formed in this country is that we go back to our local levels and begin at the grass roots. We have got to form coalitions with other unions, with women's groups, with black groups, with Hispanic groups, throughout our local communities."<sup>2</sup> The California AFL-CIO Executive unanimously endorsed the organization of a labor party<sup>3</sup>.

On December 4, 1980, a conference of various democratic organizations of the state of California was held in Los Angeles to discuss "Labor, the Minorities and Two-Party System". The resolution adopted by the conference called on the unions and other democratic organizations to start broad campaigns to create a mass people's party capable of opposing the bourgeois parties. The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers took an active part in that conference. William Winpisinger, president of that association, led the walk-out of the union's delegates from the Democratic Party convention, and declared the need for an independent mass labor party<sup>4</sup>.

In recent years, the progressive forces of American society have achieved tangible successes in strengthening their ties with the mass labor movement. The scope of actions and the number of participants have grown, and the tendency toward the unity of action of Black and white Americans has become more distinct.

As the cooperation between left and center forces in the unions and the general democratic movements grows in force and scope, political activity follows three principal directions. First, within the bourgeois parties groups are set up that are dissatisfied with the policy implemented by their leadership, with radical demands put forward by these groups. Second, various alliances and groups are established outside the bourgeois parties which are nevertheless linked with the two-party electoral process, particularly during the primaries. Third, a broadly based left-wing independent movement is initiated which also includes Communists. In all these three types, the progressive movement has reached a

<sup>1</sup> *UE News*, September 29, 1980, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Daily World*, January 21, 1981, p. 6.

point when further successful struggle for democratic reform and resistance to the reaction are impossible without achieving a true unity of the left-wing forces, without forming a broad anti-monopoly front.

The events in the state of New York are indicative of further politicization of the unions, their growing dissatisfaction with the bourgeois parties, including the Democratic Party that is closest to the unions.

While the AFL-CIO leadership, disaffected with President Reagan's policy, staged a broad campaign in favor of the Democratic Party, intending to lend it great help during the midterm elections to Congress, as well as during the 1984 presidential election, many unions and their locals established close links with various democratic movements. Thus, during the elections of the Mayor of New York in 1981, the Central Labor Council set up in that city formed a Unity Party with the movements of the national minorities, women and youth, which rejected the Democratic candidate Edward Koch and fielded its own candidate, Frank Barbaro, a left-wing political figure of populist tendencies.

Even without any funds to meet advertising and other expenses, and without support from the media, Barbaro received 208,000 votes during the primaries. Although the democratic opposition did not win a victory, the very fact of its stand against the bourgeois parties is important evidence of the unification of the anti-monopoly forces.

After the 1980 election Gus Hall wrote that the problem now is how to facilitate the crystallization of the anti-monopoly alternative, the alternative of a common front in opposition to the course of the two parties of monopoly capital; and how to unite the broad sections of the people disaffected with the two old parties and those groups that have not yet got rid of their political trammels. In short, the problem is how to lay the foundation for political independence.

# CHAPTER V

## THE RACIAL-ETHNIC ISSUES AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

### Some Results of the Migration of Black Americans

In the second half of the 20th century, there were important changes in the class structure of the US Black population. The overwhelming majority of Blacks in agriculture were uprooted, migrated to the cities and major industrial centers and joined the ranks of the American working class. Nearly 90 per cent of Black workers found employment in industry, commerce and services.

The 1960s and 1970s were marked by an unprecedented rise in the movement against racism. It will be no exaggeration to say that after the Civil War there had been no other period in the Black liberation movement in which it affected so profoundly all the areas of the country's socio-economic and political life. The growing intensity of the fight of the Black people and other national minorities for equal rights and freedoms is also an indication of the special significance of the present period in American history. The Black movement developed as a stubborn and unabating fight for democratic rights and power in the hope of achieving a reform and a revolution. From year to year, it expanded geographically, from the South to the North and from coast to coast. It spread to all strata of the Black community from top to bottom, drawing in millions of Black men, women and youth.

Their position of socio-economic inferiority compels the national minorities to protest vigorously against discrimination and Jim Crowism. Indians, Americans of Afro-Asian and Latin American origin are among the worst afflicted by the monopoly capital oppression, which is manifested in various forms of capitalist exploitation, chronic mass unemployment, and contempt for the minorities.

The most acute of these issues is the racial question, which is an inalienable part of the crisis of American capitalism. The problem of race relations in the USA has always attracted the attention of the progressive public. The Communist Party attaches exceptional importance to this issue. Thus, the CP 21st National Convention stated in its main political resolution in 1975: "The struggle for Black liberation is a central factor in all struggles for social progress in this country. It is the cornerstone of the struggle against all forms of racial and national oppression." Stressing the importance of that thesis of the CPUSA program, *Political Affairs*, the American Communist journal, wrote: "The racial, national and class oppression of Black Americans is the key-stone of the entire system of racial and national oppression".<sup>1</sup>

American capitalism is incapable of overcoming racial and ethnic contradictions. Referring to the policy and ideology of the American bourgeoisie, Lenin wrote: "Having 'freed' the Negroes, it took good care, under 'free', republican-democratic capitalism, to restore everything possible, and do everything possible and impossible for the most shameless and despicable oppression of the Negroes."<sup>2</sup> Under the conditions of racial discrimination and segregation, the processes of assimilation assumed grotesquely distorted forms.

The history of Afro-Americans is one of discrimination and segregation. Even the conservative economist Sumner H. Slichter regarded that situation as the whites' greatest error. In his view, the country would have been in a much better position if the Black community had developed in complete freedom.

What, then, are the characteristic features of the economic position of Afro-Americans, what changes in the migration processes took place between 1965 and 1980? In the late 1940s, there were 14,460,000 Blacks in the USA, which accounted for 10 per cent of the population, of which 10 million lived in 17 Southern states. By 1965, the number of Afro-Americans grew to 25 million (some 11 per cent of the US population). According to the Black press, more than 2 million Blacks left the Southern states between 1962 and 1967. Of

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, February 1979, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> V.I. Lenin, "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 24-25.

these, 1 million settled in New York, while the rest joined the urban population of Washington, Baltimore, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Los Angeles and other industrial cities.

Migration from the South to the North developed at a fast rate. Finding himself in a labyrinth of unsolved problems, a poor man feels trapped. He needs better work, credit, a good house, better education for his children. So he starts his search for happiness in a long march North and West, full of danger and risks. Blacks were leaving the South in search of work, better pay and decent housing.

The historical distinctions between the agricultural South and the industrial North are becoming an anachronism. On the one hand, the South is in the process of rapid industrialization. As has been indicated above, many monopolies relocate their capitals and factories, moving them from the North to the South in search of cheap manpower. On the other hand, Blacks looking for jobs moved to the Northern and Western states.

Yesterday's plantation pariahs now become a reserve industrial army. The majority of them have no skills or experience; they are on the brink of utter destitution. Detroit is a typical example. Right after WW II the Black population there was 285,000. The Black quarters of the "paradise valley" overflowed with the Black migrants from the South now crowded in slums, in garrets and basements or in shanty towns infested with rats and insects. Thousands upon thousands of unskilled workers from Ford Motor, General Motors and Chrysler lived there.

In the 1950s, the view was still widely current that the Black problem was rooted in the agrarian question. There are historical grounds for that view: suffice it to recall that there were less than 4 per cent of Blacks employed in industry before 1935. Most Black Americans worked in agriculture and in service, particularly in the states usually referred to as the Black Belt. Harry Haywood, the author of the book *Negro Liberation*, was justified in stating in the 1940s: "The Negro question in the United States is agrarian in origin. It involves the problem of a depressed peasantry living under a system of sharecropping, riding-boss supervision, debt slavery, chronic

land hunger, and dependency—in short, the plantation system, a relic of a chattel slavery."<sup>1</sup>

However, already at that time rapid migration of the population from the Black Belt began, which has continued to these days. In the last few decades, the US working class swelled considerably through the influx of Black workers. Already in 1973, Marxist scholars, drawing on American statistics, included more than 9 million Blacks in the working class, or 96 per cent of all Blacks in hired jobs. That number included technicians, office clerks, service workers and some 3 million belonging to the industrial proletariat. As a result of mass migration of Blacks, their share in the population of the South dropped from 70 per cent in 1950 to 58 per cent in 1960. By the end of the 1960s, two-thirds of the Black population in the USA lived in the cities.<sup>2</sup>

There have been profound changes in the industrialization and urbanization of the US Black population. Thus, in 1910, 2.7 million Blacks lived in the cities and 7.1 million in the rural areas, whereas in 1960 the figures were 13.8 million and 5.1 million respectively. The statistics given below show the changes in the class structure of the US Black population (at the beginning of the 1970s)<sup>3</sup>:

Classes, social strata	Numbers (in thousands)	Percentage of all employed
Total number employed	8,403	100
including:		
the working class	7,240	86.2
intelligentsia	756	9.0
office and service employees	227	2.7
urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, capitalists	180	2.1

"Our Party", US Communists stated, "has always fought for the full economic, political and social equality of Black people... Major changes took place in these objective condi-

<sup>1</sup> H. Haywood, *Negro Liberation*, International Publishers, New York, 1948, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Computed from W. Brink, L. Harris, *The Negro Revolution in America*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1964, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> A.N. Melnikov, *Contemporary Class Structure in the USA*, Moscow, 1974, p. 129 (in Russian).

tions, however. Industry moved South. Agriculture became a greatly mechanized enterprise, and cotton shifted to the West. More and more Black people were driven off the land and took jobs in industry in the cities, North, South and West. Especially during World War II. One million Black people left the Black Belt between 1940 and 1950; a million-and-a-half left the South."<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, nearly 25 million poor men and women, Black and white, left the agricultural sphere within 25 years.

In this way the Black question, agrarian in the 19th century, developed into a working-class issue in the 20th century.

#### Discrimination and Segregation of Colored People and Propaganda of "Equal Opportunity"

The economic inequality of Black workers in the industries is manifested, first of all, in the hiring conditions and wages. The bourgeois propaganda talks a great deal about "full employment". According to some, unemployment at the level of 3 to 5 per cent means full employment. Others, agreeing with them, assume that a certain percentage of unemployment is necessary to check inflation in the country. Finally, a third category allege that there are many who do not want to work, which in its turn makes for the growth of unemployment.

John Galbraith, a well-known liberal economist, does not deny that underlying the inequality between Blacks and whites relative to employment and fair wages is discrimination. He points out that the Blacks have to overcome great difficulties to get jobs. At the same time, he is inclined to explain the situation by "the low level of educational qualification among Negroes, reflecting not discrimination, per se, by the industrial system but prior disadvantages in schools and environment. A well-educated Negro is not so necessarily the first fired or the last hired."<sup>2</sup>

However, the American press carries numerous proofs of discrimination against Blacks, Indians, Latin Americans and other minorities. All steel companies practically engage

in discrimination. It begins in the hot shops near the open furnaces where a great many Puerto Ricans work. Blacks are exclusively employed in dirty jobs where exhausting manual labor predominates.

Galbraith's views are supported by a group of historians and economists: Simon Kuznets, David Lilienthal, Robert Sedgwick, John B. Parrish, Sidney Sufrin, Carroll R. Daugherty and others. Most of them view the problem upside down. They declare a low educational level to be the cause and discrimination the consequence, whereas in reality it is the other way round.

The social inequality of the Blacks is rooted in the economic structure, in the capitalist system under which they cannot get a good education and job training or improve their skills.

In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act banning discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic affinity, skin color, religious views or sex in hiring, dismissal, promotion, etc. The Act forbade racial discrimination "in any place for public accommodation", "not only where state action was involved, but where interstate commerce was affected"<sup>1</sup>. The Department of Justice was empowered to start proceedings against offenders, but it soon became clear that the efforts of the authorities to make companies observe the law were largely futile. Characteristically, not a single major government contract with any company violating the 1964 Act has been broken off.

The Communist Party USA counters racist propaganda with its internationalist ideology. William Z. Foster denounced the spirit of racism which had been propagated for so long that it "subtly permeates our national language, customs, and habits... Large sections of the working class, constantly subjected to this flood of intellectual filth, are also more or less afflicted with it."<sup>2</sup>

Labor unions usually provide more precise data on unemployment than the Department of Labor. The report to the UAW 25th Constitutional Convention in Los Angeles (1977)

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, August 11, 1979, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> J.K. Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1967, p. 241.

<sup>1</sup> Howard Zinn, *Postwar America: 1945-1972*, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., Indianapolis and New York, 1973, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> William Z. Foster, *The Negro People in American History*, International Publishers, New York, 1954, p. 544.

cites the following statistics on the growth of unemployment among white and Black workers (in percentages):

	1950s	1960s	1970s
White workers	4.1	4.3	5.6
Blacks and other minorities	8.2	9.0	10.6

In November 1968, *Daily World* published comparative statistics of the US Department of Labor on unemployment among Blacks and whites in the country's 20 major areas. It transpired that during the period of "longest prosperity", between 1960 and 1970, the average percentage of the unemployed among Blacks was 7.5, and among white workers—3.3. A similar comparison of young workers, between 16 and 19, shows an even more marked difference: unemployment ran at 33 per cent among the Blacks, three times as high as the average unemployment among the white youth.<sup>1</sup>

The following figures characterize the distribution of ethnic minorities in 8 major cities in these years: 70 per cent Blacks, 10 per cent Puerto Ricans, and 8 per cent Chicanos (Americans of Mexican descent). Unemployment was highest among the Blacks. The right to work still remains a myth for many millions of Americans. In the 1970s, the situation became even more acute.

In these years, the intense process of migration of the white urban population to the green belts of the suburbs was paralleled by the settlement of Black families arriving from Southern states in the overcrowded downtown areas and slums unfit for habitation. In 1970, the suburban population exceeded for the first time that of inner city (74.9 million and 62.2 million). In 1968, the law against racial discrimination in housing was passed, while the Supreme Court finally extended Constitutional protection to all those desiring to buy or rent living accommodation. The Supreme Court ruled that private contracts in this area discriminatory against Blacks violate the 13th Amendment. It defined that kind of discrimination as a survival of slavery. The ruling revived a law passed in 1866 (but never enforced) and asserted every citizen's equal right to rent, inherit, buy, lease, sell, possess and hand over property to other persons.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, November 5, 1968, p. 5.

In the late 1970s, unemployment in the USA assumed threatening proportions (9 million). George Meany stated that it actually comprised 10.9 per cent. That was the national average. As for Black Americans, unemployment among them is usually well above the national level. Suffice it to mention that in early 1976 more than 40 per cent of Black youths were looking for jobs. The Carter administration ignored the needs of the Black population, which lived in poverty and unemployment.

In Newark, New Jersey, in 1940, Blacks accounted for only 10.5 per cent of the population while in July 1967 the figure was already 52 per cent. Apart from Blacks, 10 per cent of the population are Puerto Ricans. Dozens of thousands of white workers left Newark in the 1960s. Some of them moved to the suburbs. Industries in the inner city were being closed down and relocated to Southern states. Unemployment grew due to the flight of capital to the South and abroad. The Blacks and Puerto Ricans coming to live in Newark brought nothing but poverty and desperation. It is generally recognized that 17,000 families were on the brink of destitution. New Jersey had the lowest per capita federal relief of all the states. The funds available to municipal and state agencies were extremely scanty. In 1968, in Newark alone, there were 14,500 unemployed; most of them were Blacks (11.5 per cent of the Black work force in the city).

American industrial cities were living through a grave crisis, its consequences directly affecting the position of the Black population and other minorities. In this way ghost cities were born torn by racial and ethnic strife and frequent disturbances. Newark was the scene of such racial unrest in July 1967. The Governor of New Jersey called the Newark tragedy "criminal insurrection" and "open rebellion". He sent 300 policemen and 3,000 National Guardsmen to suppress the riots. As a result, 24 were killed, 1,300 injured, and 1,650 arrested. Fires destroyed the districts along Springfield Avenue and Morris St. In reporting the Newark events, *International Herald Tribune* called the rebels "Newark looters".<sup>1</sup>

At the 15th Convention of the transport workers' union in New York, Lane Kirkland, then secretary-treasurer of the

<sup>1</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, July 17, 1967, pp. 1, 2, 6.

AFL-CIO and now its president, spoke of the effect of unemployment depending on race and ethnic affinity. He said that in 1976 in every thousand of the unemployed in the USA there were 70 whites, 115 Latin Americans, and 138 Blacks.<sup>1</sup> In January 1978, President Carter admitted in his State of the Union message to Congress that the level of unemployment among the national minorities was twice as high as that among the whites.

Martin Luther King wrote of the Black man: "Of the good things in life he has approximately one-half those of whites; of the bad he has twice those of whites."<sup>2</sup> To see the justice of those words, it is enough to compare the average annual incomes of white, Latin American and Black families of four, on the quite improbable premise that all the working members of the family are fully employed 52 weeks a year. In 1972 and 1973, the average income of a Black family increased by 6 per cent only (from \$6,864 to \$7,269), whereas the income of a white family increased by 9 per cent (from \$11,549 to \$12,595).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics usually considers three types of annual budgets: higher, intermediate, and minimal. In accordance with that classification, the budget of Blacks and other minorities was adjusted to the cheapest budget bracket said to enable that group of families to make ends meet. In 1977, the average income of a Black family was \$8,780, of a Latin American—\$9,550, and of a white family—\$14,270.

Black women employed in service were the most underprivileged category of workers and the most discriminated against. They were mostly employed in low-paying branches of the economy. According to the US Department of Labor statistics, the average annual income of a Black working woman grew fourfold in 1965 compared with 1939, but it constituted merely 71 per cent of the white working woman's income. Since most Black women worked in the sphere of service, that meant that more than 1.5 million women were not covered by the law stipulating the federal wage minimum.

<sup>1</sup> *AFL-CIO News*, September 24, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> M.L. King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 6.

In 1884, a giant Statue of Liberty was erected on an island in the New York haven. A poem by Emma Lazarus is inscribed on the pedestal:

*Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!..  
Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

Many years have passed since those times. The USA has become fabulously rich, but there is no getting rid of the poor. The President's Economic Report of 1972 admitted that there were 25 million Americans whose incomes were below the official poverty line.<sup>1</sup> Even *U.S. News & World Report*, close to the official circles, published an article, "Can Affluent America End Poverty?", which sounded a pessimistic note: "The United States—wealthiest of all nations—is finding it increasingly difficult to reduce the ranks of its poor... Poverty is found in all parts of the country, especially, in crowded urban complexes and in isolated rural areas. The South has more than 44 per cent of the nation's poor, a larger proportion than any other geographic region."<sup>2</sup> According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1971 the average cost of living was \$10,971, but only 48.1 per cent of the white families and 23.5 of the Black had that income.

In his polemics with Kuznets, Galbraith and other economists propounding apologist theories of the leveling of incomes and "affluent society", Professor Howard Zinn of Boston University cited numerous examples of poverty in New York, San Antonio, New Haven and many other cities. He reported that in 1968, 9 million families lived below the poverty line. In the same year, 36 per cent of Black families had an income of less than \$4,000 per annum.<sup>3</sup>

Following its three-dimensional scheme of computing the cost of living, the Bureau of Labor Statistics studied in 1975-

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Report of the President Transmitted to the Congress February 1974*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1974, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, August 14, 1972, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> H. Zinn, *Op. cit.*, p. 95.



1977 the living conditions of families in 40 cities in various parts of the country. The real cost of living in the USA is much higher than the Bureau's average model indicates. In Chicago, for one, which came 12th among those cities, the minimum annual budget amounted to \$10,380, intermediate—\$16,561, and higher—\$32,804. If average annual incomes of Black and Latin American families are to be compared with the actual cost of living in the cities of the US North and West, it will be found that their position here too is very difficult.

Oppressed and exploited, millions of Americans of Afro-Asian and Latin American descent suffered from chronic unemployment and high cost of living. Even the minimum budget worked out by the Bureau of Statistics in 1975 made a mockery of the "equal opportunity" slogan relative to the Black population and poor whites. To keep up with that budget, the worker head of a family would have to earn \$4.82 per hour, 40 hours a week. Agricultural Black workers and Mexican immigrant laborers, the "wet backs", nearly all of them unorganized, were at the lowest rung of the ladder of wellbeing, getting one \$1.0 for an hour's work.

Most agricultural workers were not covered by the legislation on fair hiring of labor force (1938) which set down minimum wages and maximum working hours. That minimum of 40 cents an hour meant that a worker might get more, depending on the economic situation and the level of employment. Since the passing of the law, workers continued to fight for raising the minimum wages and increasing the number of those covered by the law. In 1961, for instance, the minimum was set at \$1.25 per hour, while the number of workers whom the law applied to was estimated at 24 million, with 22 million low-paid workers remaining outside it.

At the Walter Reuther Library in Detroit, there is the fund of AFL-CIO leader William L. Kircher which contains some materials on the extremely low earnings of agricultural workers in California. Their minimum wage was \$1.0 in 1967, \$1.15 in 1968, and \$1.3 in 1969. In 1965, 3.1 million working heads of families had an average annual income of \$2,900 each. By the end of 1976, the hourly wage minimum was frozen at \$2.3. The indignant workers called it disgraceful, for it was below the official poverty line. As George Meany admitted, 10 million low-paid workers lived at that level.

A great mass of Black workers were not protected by the minimum wage legislation at all. In his book *Economics of Racism U.S.A.*, Victor Perlo pointed out that half the Black population of the country lived below the poverty line, and that the great majority of Blacks would not be able to rise to a level recognized in the USA as moderate.<sup>1</sup> The author denounced the fabrications of bourgeois ideologists who alleged that Black Americans attained equality with whites in their incomes and standard of living.

The union press paid great attention to the campaign for raising the subsistence minimum, but the methods of that campaign differed but little from those of the past years. The AFL-CIO leaders were chary of unleashing the initiative and activity of the working masses. At best, they told them to petition the White House or Congress. The AFL-CIO demanded the endorsement of a minimum \$3 hourly wage, but President Carter refused to support that demand, offering \$2.5 an hour.

Representative John H. Dent (D., Penn.) introduced a bill providing for a new minimum—\$2.85 an hour, and \$3 beginning with January 2, 1978, which would be 60 per cent of an average wage in the manufacturing industry. That would have been the ceiling that a skilled Black worker might look forward to. In 1977, the AFL-CIO set up a Coalition for a fair wage minimum, with Clarence Mitchell as its chairperson, a rather incohesive amalgamation of organized labor, liberal and progressive associations like the NAACP.

Union leaders continued to support the Dent bill, insisting on fulfilling the Democratic election promise of a wage rise. Jack Conway, Chairman of the Bakery and Confectionary Workers, referred to Carter's offer as inadequate and disgraceful. On behalf of 140,000 members of that union Conway demanded that the President should take back his proposal, and that the government should support Congressman Dent's motion as its own.

Colored workers take an active part in the struggle for improved working conditions and job safety. In California, an organization is active which makes public the data on industrial accidents and exposes the machinations of companies

<sup>1</sup> V. Perlo, *Economics of Racism U.S.A. Roots of Black Inequality*, International Publishers, New York, 1975.

that refuse to invest in improving safety. One of its pamphlets reported that 2.5 million workers were injured in industrial accidents each year, 14,000 lost their lives in accidents and 100,000 died of occupational diseases. That organization demanded state and federal legislation on job safety.

Segregation of Blacks is practiced everywhere and in a variety of forms and ways. It exists in the unions, too. Union bureaucrats are intent on splitting the workers, on fanning ethnic strife and spreading the ideology of racism in the movement. Racist union bosses refuse to protect Black workers' interests (in hiring, as one case). A considerable body of union members supported segregation of Blacks not only in the economic sphere but also in social life.

At the beginning of the 1970s, there were more than 150 segregated Black labor unions in the AFL-CIO. Segregation is even stronger in the selection of union officials. Union leaders show no inclination to combat effectively racist attitudes among masses of white workers and discrimination in the unions. They are either influenced by racist ideology themselves or are afraid to fight it.

Many authors rightly believe one of the causes of manifestations of racist ideology in the unions to be the unwillingness of the union bosses to change their stance on the Black problem. Regrettably, the situation still prevails.

Racists try to convince white workers that if Blacks should study in the same schools as whites, the level of education will fall. White parents therefore often object to co-education of Black and white children. Under the influence of racist propaganda, such workers vote for racist candidates in Congressional, governor and municipal elections.

### Petty-Bourgeois Illusions of Black Leaders

The second half of the 1960s was marked by growing militancy among many leaders of the Black liberation movement. Calls for "revolutionary" methods of struggle became more frequent. Racists themselves often provoked Afro-Americans to action. Acute conflicts, violence and terror against the Blacks frustrated the illusions about a peaceful solution of their problems. In 1971, the newspaper *Black News* published an article by a Black leader, James Boggs. The author wrote that the Black movement was split on the ques-

tion of the goals and methods of struggle. He saw only one way out of the crisis—the founding of a revolutionary Black party in the United States. He asserted that the Blacks could not be liberated without a Black revolution.

Boggs's conclusions were unscientific, and this "revolutionary" phraseology meaningless. He called for a seizure of power by the Blacks, yet he was helpless on issues of tactics and strategy. Declarations of the humanist goals of a "Black revolution", of "revolutionary strategy and revolutionary leadership" were not based on a concrete analysis of the class forces. But the principal shortcoming of Boggs's program was his negation of the leading role of the working class in the revolution. Boggs asserted that the American proletariat had had a chance to carry out a revolution in the 1930s, but its movement had not developed into a revolutionary struggle for political power, and the capitalist class was therefore capable of integrating the labor movement in the capitalist system through concessions and economic advantages.

White workers, the article further insists, enjoy the benefits corresponding to the American standard; politically, they are part of the "middle class". The unions faithfully and steadfastly defend the status quo. The US working class gets its share of profits extracted by American capitalism as a result of imperialist exploitation of the peoples of Latin America, Africa and Asia, and of the Black people within the country as well, while the Blacks are only marginally involved in the American way of life, they are less bribed, and affluence is far beyond their reach. But it is Black Americans, in Boggs's view, who have the greatest potential for overthrowing the existing system.

His theses echo left-extremist ideas about the entire working class becoming bourgeois-integrated, about the "well-fed vs. hungry" proletariat, with its revolutionary spirit drooping or soaring accordingly. These are obvious echoes of the myths propagated by Herbert Marcuse and other bourgeois ideologues intended to sap the Marxist proposition of the historic mission of the working class and its leading role in social progress.

Boggs rules out any cooperation with progressive white organizations, restricting the social basis of the Black movement to Black youth and anarchist-minded poor whites.

Radical views were also voiced by other Black leaders,

in particular those of the Black Panther Party—Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael, Bobby Seale and others. The Black Panther Party was founded in Oakland, California, in October 1966 by Huey Newton, its theoretician. Nearly half the population of Oakland are Blacks. The party was joined by 30,000 Blacks.

Its program proclaimed demands for freedom and power, full employment for Blacks, “an end to the robbery by the white man of our Black Community”, “decent housing fit for shelter of human beings”, “education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society”, “an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people”. It also called for “freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails”, and for “all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States”.<sup>1</sup>

The view of many Black leaders was that the path to fulfilling that program lay through an armed struggle of Blacks, no matter whether it would begin as an offensive or a defensive action. Influenced by anarchist ideas, Newton, Cleaver and others called on the masses to act decisively—something for which the masses were not ready yet. Black Panther leaders proclaimed the “Black Power” slogan in areas where Blacks were in the majority, and fair representation for the Blacks and their participation in government where they were in the minority. These leaders did not want to consider the real balance of forces in the country. Armed struggle which they advocated proved to be doomed to failure. This orientation of Black leaders was a great help to the ruling class, and it could only increase the pessimism of the Black masses, separating them from the American people’s overall struggle against the reaction, monopoly domination and imperialism. In the final analysis, it led to adventurism, sectarianism and factional strife. “Power and liberation for the Black people cannot be won via a separatist

<sup>1</sup> Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time*, Arrow Books, London, 1970, pp. 86-89.

‘strategy’,” Henry Winston, leader of the Communist Party, emphasized.<sup>1</sup>

Opposing racism, Winston explains that the gist of racist strategy lies precisely in creating the illusion in the minds of both white and Black workers that differences in their standard of living are not produced by capitalism. Racist propaganda endeavors to convince white Americans that their Black compatriots’ lower living standards are the result of their congenital inefficiency, while it assures Black Americans that racism is not a product of the capitalist system but a quality inherent in all whites.

Black Panther leaders explained the crisis in their party (which led to a split) entirely in terms of police and FBI repression and provocation. But the main cause for that crisis was extremism, on the one hand, and the untenable idea of “Black capitalism”, on the other, advocated by its leaders. Henry Winston wrote on this score: “The advocates of ‘Black capitalism’ pursue the illusion that the white monopolists stand ready to share their control of the country’s economy with Black capitalists. This is particularly ludicrous since any would-be Black capitalist can recount the difficulties he faces in even trying to get a petty loan from the Small Business Administration to get his projected business venture off the ground.”<sup>2</sup>

There were just about 5 thousand Black capitalists with an annual income of more than \$100,000 each, while there were 360 thousand whites in that category. Blacks own mostly small businesses in the sphere of service. Their share amounts to 2.2 per cent of the entire American business, and they account for only 1 per cent of the entire US turnover in commodities and services; 88 per cent of the Black population are workers. It is thus clear that real improvements in the life of the Black population could only be attained through joint struggle with white workers against their common enemy, state-monopoly capitalism.

Andrew F. Brimmer, member of the Federal Reserve Board and former deputy assistant secretary of the Department of

<sup>1</sup> H. Winston, *Strategy for a Black Agenda. A Critique of New Theories of Liberation in the United States of America*, International Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 303-04.

Commerce, became prominent among Black students of the problem of "Black capitalism". After many years of studying small Black businesses he came to the conclusion that the strategy of "Black capitalism", though it may somewhat improve the lot of a few Black Americans, at the same time impedes their progress as a whole and distracts the Black people from participating in the mainstream of the national economy.

Speaking before the American Economic Association, Brimmer outlined several aspects of his study of the economic potential of Black capitalism. It became fashionable to regard the Black capitalism strategy as a means of stimulating the economic development of Blacks, he said. In actual fact, that opportunity holds little promise for the majority of the Black population. What Brimmer called the ghetto economy could not guarantee the profitability of business or the possibility of significant capital investment. Private enterprise is a way out for a few, while it holds nothing but a meager subsistence fraught with the risk of living in debt for the majority of the Black population. As the sociologists Leonard Broom and Norval Glenn of the University of Texas justly wrote, Black business in the United States "has had a dismal history, and it may have an even more dismal future".<sup>1</sup>

In defending their theoretical propositions, Black Panther leaders insisted that they were guided by Marxist-Leninist theory. In actual fact, they merely borrowed its terminology, far from mastering the theory itself. They tended to exaggerate the role of their organization in American history, calling it the vanguard of the Black revolution.

The FBI and the police in the various states brought down severe reprisals on the Black Panthers. In 1969, 200 members of the party were put on trial in various West Coast cities. In New York alone, 60 members of the party were prosecuted. 28 of its prominent leaders were shot in police raids. The situation in the country looked like an endless war of the police and secret agencies against Blacks and the Black Panther Party.

As a result of internal contradictions, the Black Panther Party was weakened both organizationally and, in particular,

<sup>1</sup> L. Broom and N.D. Glenn, *Transformation of the Negro American*. Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1963, p. 136.

ideologically. In his work "The Crisis of the Black Panther Party", Henry Winston pointed out that "even these brutal and murderous attacks, conducted both from within and outside the organization, cannot alone explain the crisis of the Black Panther Party". Even before Eldridge Cleaver joined the party, Newton had substituted the concept of elitism for mass struggle. "Cleaver's influence brought the elitist concept to new levels of anarchist, adventurist confusion and provocation."<sup>1</sup> In this way, "internal strife in the Black Panther Party deteriorated into factionalism, and—with neither faction guided by scientific theory—into an inevitable split".<sup>2</sup>

The developed and embittered Black self-awareness came out into the open. It became clear that racism could not be eradicated by liberal reforms. In 1967, the country was swept by Black unrest, with the most serious disturbances occurring in Detroit and Newark. The rebellion in Detroit caused serious anxiety in the White House and Congress. The propaganda machine sought in every way to distort the true nature of the Black people's struggle.

### Growing Activity of Black Auto Workers and the Detroit Revolt

In the second half of the 1960s, there was an upsurge of political activity among Black auto workers. The auto industry was distinguished for a high concentration of Black workers. In their fight against racism, Black workers organized groups of class solidarity. Thus, the Ford Revolutionary Union Movement (FRUM) was set up at the Ford plants in Detroit, the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) at the Dodge plant, and the Eldon Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement (ELRUM) at the Eldon plant.

Unemployment was growing, particularly at the Chrysler works, where only 35 thousand worked at the end of the 1960s instead of the 100,000 at the beginning of the decade.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Winston, "The Crisis of the Black Panther Party", *World Marxist Review*, December 1971, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> D. Georgakas, M. Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying. A Study in Urban Revolution*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1975, p. 34.

Referring to dozens of thousands of unemployed Blacks in the state of Michigan, James Roche, President of the General Motors Corporation, said: "There will always be people who are willing to work the 10-12-hour day, and we're going to look for them."<sup>1</sup>

At the Dodge Main plant, nearly all managerial positions were filled by whites: 95 per cent of foremen, 100 per cent of shop managers, and 90 per cent of highest skilled workers were whites.<sup>2</sup>

The bloodbath in July 1967 in Detroit strengthened the mood of Black nationalism among Afro-American auto workers. Many of them joined the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which was particularly active at the Dodge plant. In May 1968, publication was begun of the newspaper *Inner City Voice*. The organizers of the newspaper and the League declared Blacks to be the vanguard of the liberation struggle, which in fact meant Black self-isolation from white workers and doomed the movement to failure. They believed that the "revolution" was to be carried out by Black workers, students, intellectuals and the lumpenproletariat. At many plants in Detroit, Blacks organized rallies and pickets. ELRUM leaflets reported attacks on that organization by company stooges.

The establishment of such organizations was a step forward in the development of the movement. With all their shortcomings and weaknesses, they helped to acquire experience in the struggle against racism, they came out against the anti-labor and racist policy of the car companies. The newspapers of radical Black organizations called on their readers to fight police brutality and demanded that the government carry out its election promises of social, racial and ethnic equality.

Members of those organizations were also very active in the wildcat strikes. Black college students and intellectuals also came out in force on the picket lines. The growth of a militant spirit among the Black proletariat met with a hostile attitude, sometimes restrained and at other times open, among the leadership of the auto workers' union.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

FBI spies and police stoolpigeons intensified their search for "unreliables" among the Black population and other minorities. Discontent among the Black people grew. Conflicts between Black workers and management on the shop floor were becoming more frequent. This mood was especially strong at the General Motors, Ford Motor and Chrysler plants in Detroit.

The history of the automobile production is inconceivable without Detroit, the country's major center greatly affecting the life of the entire state of Michigan. "The capital of American political power is Washington, D.C.," wrote Colman McCarthy, "but for those who regard money as more formidable than laws, the real power is elsewhere—in Detroit. In the hoard rooms of General Motors—the world's mightiest corporation, with 55 per cent of the United States automobile market—decisions are routinely made that affect the lives of Americans in ways that the actions of Congressmen seldom do."<sup>1</sup>

Back in 1940, 320,000 naturalized Americans settled in that enormous industrial center, of which the British and Irish made up 14 per cent, Canadians 23, and Italians 8 per cent. Poles, Jews and a vast number of Arabs settled here at various periods, and that international conglomerate also absorbed a great many Blacks over the decades. 60,000 Blacks moved here between 1940 and 1942 alone. East Side, the poorest quarter of Detroit, is the heart of the Black community. The most significant section of the Black proletarians were unskilled workers who suffered more than most from racist oppression.

Detroit had long been seen as a city of racial, religious and economic disturbances, a delayed-action bomb. The situation in Detroit illustrates the crisis in the American cities, one of the causes of which is the unwillingness or inability of its masters to solve the racial and ethnic question in the spirit and in the interest of the working people. The city was twice devastated by big fires, and its public utilities were badly run down. The municipal authorities could not overcome the housing and financial crisis.

<sup>1</sup> R.L. Heilbroner, Morton Minz, C. McCarthy *et al.*, *In the Name of Profit*, Doubleday and Company, Inc., New York, 1972, p. 32.

Racial and religious prejudices and, at the same time, fanaticism of settlers from the South took deep root in Detroit. These moods and tendencies also imposed their imprint on the union movement in the state of Michigan. At the same time, there was a strong anti-racist and anti-chauvinist tendency in the union, which made possible its very existence as one of the most influential branches of the UAW.

The revolt of July 1967 exceeded in scope and ferocity the 1943 events. It reflected the most important features of the struggle of Afro-Americans against racism, in which class and racial conflicts are closely interwoven.

Replying to a question about the causes of revolt in Detroit, one of the Black leaders, Albert Cleage, said that the Blacks suffered from unemployment, and some stupidity on the part of the police was enough for anger to flare up. Cleage was careful in his choice of words, for in actual fact the revolt in Detroit was provoked by the police. According to official statistics, 43 dead and 347 wounded were picked up in the streets. Besides, some 3,800 were arrested on suspicion of taking part in the riots. Nearly 5 thousand people were left homeless. Whole blocks lay in ruins, 1,300 dwelling houses and 2,700 plants, shops and warehouses were destroyed. The total damage was assessed at \$500 million.

The events began on Sunday, July 23, with a police raid on a well-known bar belonging to the United Community League for Civic Action in 12th St. The raid was staged by 12 policemen who arrested a number of persons on suspicion of arson. The arrest caused violent indignation. A crowd of some 200 gathered round the patrol cars. Chief of Precinct 10 alarmed the whole of his force. The local FBI, the district attorney's office and the fire brigade were all told to stand by for trouble. At midday, National Guards moved into the streets.

During the night of July 23, there were clashes with the police. Detroit's Mayor Jerome Cavanagh declared a state of siege. Shooting broke out sporadically, and fires started in various districts. On July 24, the frightened municipal and state authorities appealed to President Johnson for help. Senator Robert Griffin (Michigan) told Congress that he had personally asked the President to send federal troops to Detroit. He did not miss the chance to insinuate that the Communists were to blame for the riots: "The possibility that these

riots could be Communist inspired or organized by outside influences should be investigated."<sup>1</sup>

Mayor Cavanagh and Michigan Governor George Romney made a radio and TV announcement that they had requested 5 thousand federal troops to be sent to Detroit.<sup>2</sup> After flying over the city in a helicopter, Romney said that the impression was that the city had been bombed. He admitted that the events had gone out of control. Two National Guard battalions were moving from Grand Rapids and Flint. During the second day, armed detachments were concentrated in the West Side area. At the President's orders, paratroopers from a division that had fought in Korea and Vietnam were moved there. Police units and National Guards took up positions in the Inner City. The operation was directed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance (later Secretary of State), personally representing the President.

On July 26, tanks moved into the city, and machine-gun fire started. Lieutenant-General John Throckmorton, commander of the federal troops (82nd Airborne Division), was given orders to crush the revolt. Senator Griffin enthusiastically approved of the punitive action of the police, National Guards and the federal troops. Whole areas of Detroit were enveloped in flames: more than 5 thousand buildings were on fire. Thousands of workers did not turn up for work at the auto works.

The bourgeois media at first kept silence on the happenings, but soon scanty information about the operations became available. As the fighting increased, the press had to report the events at greater length.

On Labor Day, September 3, 1967, a local newspaper wrote that a civil war had raged in the city in July. The newspaper of the UAW, forgetting its purpose and solidarity with Blacks, provided more or less complete information about the events of July only in September. The only union newspaper which tried to throw light on the events in Detroit at the time was *Ford Facts*. The United Auto Workers' leadership instructed

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Record. Proceedings and Debates of the 90th Congress, First Session*, Vol. 113, Part 15, July 19 to July 31, 1967, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1967, p. 19818.

<sup>2</sup> H.G. Locke, *The Detroit Riot of 1967*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1969, p. 36.



second vice-chairman R. Battle, a Black, to publish a review of the Black people's action in Detroit, expressing the attitude of the UAW leadership. He described the events as "vandalism of suspicious elements".

The leaders of the United Auto Workers knew full well that since the Civil War the Black people had followed the path of non-violent action. In recent years, their movement had developed under the leadership of Martin Luther King, who preached the philosophy of non-violent resistance. All attempts by the Black people to solve their problems in that way found no other response from the racists than mass terror, assassinations of their leaders, the blowing up of their churches and the burning of their homes.

As distinct from the leaders advocating non-violent action, the rebels stressed in their leaflets and appeals that the events in Detroit and in other areas signified the beginning of a new stage in the Black struggle for freedom in which the fight against racial oppression is combined with class protest. Except for a few isolated clashes, whites and Blacks did not kill one another, which enraged both capitalists and policemen.

The leaflets said that many white workers in Detroit had little concern for the destiny of capitalism, nor did they show any readiness to overthrow it. Meanwhile, Black workers of Ford Motor, Chrysler and General Motors took an active part in the revolt.

The bourgeois system did everything to suppress open expression of the working-class discontent with the political regime and capitalist exploitation. Spying, bribery, dismissals, intimidation and police reprisals were widely used as means toward that end.

### "Citizens Crusade Against Poverty"

In 1964, Citizens Crusade Against Poverty was set up by labor unions and other progressive public organizations; it was headed by UAW president Walter Reuther.

Approaches to the racial problem differed in the CIO and the AFL. In these days, too, anti-racist sentiments are strong in the industrial unions, while craft unions are still predominantly openly racist. Dozens of AFL-CIO unions still practice segregation with regard to Black workers. This is

particularly evident in the Railway Brotherhood. It is therefore not surprising that many craft unions in the AFL-CIO were unenthusiastic about the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty.

The initiators of that coalition believed that its chapters should be set up in areas of the greatest incidence of poverty, particularly where Black workers predominated. The CCAP political declaration said that millions of American families were living in the semi-hamlet of the country's social structure; they were young and old Black workers and those from other minorities; the hopelessness and desperation of those millions were a challenge to the entire nation; there was no moral issue that would be more burning than liquidation of the human suffering of those who lived in poverty.

CCAP branches were set up in Detroit, Chicago and Los Angeles. Their job was to raise funds, with contributions coming from labor unions, private citizens, church organizations and charities. The funds were spent on training unskilled, mostly Black, workers and helping them to learn better-paying trades.

CCAP organizers defined it as a broad non-party coalition of associations and individuals devoted to eradicating poverty. The steering committee comprised 43 members in 1964, including well-known unionists David Dubinsky, James B. Carey, W. Mitchell, Walter and Victor Reuther and others. The Walter Reuther archives contain many letters from union, farmers', religious and other public organizations approving the idea of that association. James G. Patton, chairman of the farmers' union, promising full support and cooperation from the union, emphasized that the program of retraining low-paid workers would be the main task of the organization.

Walter Reuther wrote that it was necessary to help the poor to acquire the ability to overcome poverty. Reuther approached the problem from trade-unionist positions, placing absolutely unfounded hopes on solving the problem of unskilled labor under the conditions of capitalist society. It was intended to establish a network of powerful local branches. Labor unions played the leading role in the CCAP. In Chicago, it was directed by the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department.

The position of Blacks and Chicanos of the West Coast is well illustrated by the situation in Southern California, particularly the Los Angeles area where there are compact groups of Blacks and Chicanos with extremely low earnings. Agricultural monopolies and big planters dominate the area, while union movement is very weak. The housing conditions are appalling. The food is bad and scanty, mostly rice and beans. The workers are continually in debt, wholly dependent on landowners and monopolies.

George Morris, a veteran of the US labor movement, wrote: "The majority of the farm workers ... in the United States are Chicanos (of Mexican origin), Puerto Rican and Black workers, joined by hundreds of thousands from Mexico who come over the border with legal cards or illegally... Their 'homes' from crop to crop are the shacks the growers provide for them while on the job. Most often the pigsty conditions of those shacks explode into scandals and newspaper exposures. The laws for inspection of those shacks and requiring provision of elementary conditions are hardly enforced... The practice goes on because earnings of farm workers are so low that many involve their children."<sup>1</sup>

A California resident, George Morris, has first-hand knowledge of the struggles of agricultural workers. One of their principal demands is the right to organize. "The farm workers," Morris writes, "are also victims of ruthless labor contractors who gather them up and supply them to growers... The 'illegals' are especially desired by growers because they have the club of deportation over them. Annually, immigration agents round up about 800,000 'illegals' and send them back across the border. The process is repeated the next season."<sup>2</sup>

There is no breaking out of the vicious circle. Multitudes of unemployed Blacks and Chicanos cross the whole continent in search of a better life, and reach the northeast of the country; here, in the Great Lakes area, they fall into the clutches of steel, automobile, chemical, aviation and construction companies. Migrations of the poor are thus nearly continual and constantly aggravate the social conflicts.

<sup>1</sup> G. Morris, *USSR—USA Trade Unions Compared*, Profizdat, Moscow, 1979, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The Citizens Crusade Against Poverty showed how many men and women in the USA need help, but it could not, of course, eliminate poverty. Unemployment, low wages, and police repression still remain the lot of the poor.

Several years passed, and it became clear that the program for training Black workers brought but miserable results. Groups of enthusiasts who devoted themselves to the retraining and improving the skills of Black workers were carrying a burden far beyond their strength. They had to deal with millions of unemployed. The organizers of the movement had no funds. Major monopolies, employers and their agents opposed them. The Crusade itself lacked organization, while its program was utopian in nature.

The Building and Construction Workers Union and the International Typographical Union expressed readiness to provide job training for small enterprises. Approving on the whole the idea of the Crusade, David Dubinsky, head of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, stated that the project produced a wretched impression on him. In his view, war against poverty must not be limited to charity. However, neither he nor Reuther nor dozens of other labor leaders knew how to defeat poverty under the conditions of the monopoly system.

Martin Luther King took a more sober approach to the problem, insisting that there was an organic link between the war in Vietnam and the impoverished position of Black Americans, and, consequently, between the struggle against poverty and the anti-war movement.

In an address at the Riverside Church in New York on April 4, 1967, Dr. King said: "A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor—both black and white—through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the build-up in Viet Nam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Viet Nam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube... A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on

programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."<sup>1</sup>

Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy wrote in this connection in his book *Our Day and Generation*: "While economic growth is important for all Americans, it is absolutely essential for black Americans. It is the indispensable condition of black progress."<sup>2</sup>

In the 1960s, the Black population of the USA spontaneously rose to fight against poverty and political inequality. The government promised to take immediate measures against poverty. President Johnson declared that he would create a "great society" in which there would be no poor. That declaration proved to be just another bit of electioneering. The President took urgent measures to protect the White House and the Capitol, massing federal troops in the area.

#### A Rise in the Black Movement Against Racism in 1967 and 1968

The events in Detroit sparked off a mass Black movement in 1967. The unrest spread from Detroit to Newark, Grand Rapids, Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, Minneapolis and Cambridge.<sup>3</sup> There were banner headlines in the papers: "Flames of Race War", "The Agony of Detroit", "Riots Simmer in Detroit and 20 Other U.S. Cities". At first, riots broke out in 8 cities, then in 20, then in 41 and, finally, as FBI head Edgar Hoover announced, they enveloped 52 cities of the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The Black riots, which inspired fear in many white Americans, gave pause not only to the leaders of the capitalist state, but also to some liberals, progressive public figures and intellectuals. Of course, each of them drew his or her own conclusions from the facts and current arguments, but most agreed that a repetition of mass unrest among Black Americans must be avoided.

<sup>1</sup> *Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Viet Nam*, New York, April 4, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> *Our Day and Generation*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1979, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> *Herald Tribune*, July 28, 1967; *Daily World*, July 27, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, July 27, August 2, 7, 9, 1967.

The President and Congress discussed bills that would dampen the racial conflicts; the Pentagon and law enforcement officers worked out the tactics of joint action of police and the army in suppressing street disturbances. Union leaders and clergymen issued appeals for combating poverty and went in for charity. They condemned "un-Christian" methods of fighting racism.

Riots began in Harlem, the New York ghetto. Mayor John Lindsay alerted the city police. 5 thousand federal troops were sent to Chicago to help the 15 thousand National Guards. The troops opened fire in the southern suburbs of the city, where 11 persons were killed and 300 wounded.

The riots spread to Providence, Cincinnati, Nashville, Atlanta and, finally, Washington, where Congress was debating the Civil Rights Bill. President Johnson, one of the initiators of the War on Poverty program, gave sanctions to crush the rioters who had dared to claim a right to human dignity. Bertram M. Gross, editor of the book *A Great Society?* dealing with questions of combating poverty, reproached President Johnson, who had already "visited the front lines of our armed forces in Asia", but had not toured "the poverty lines in our own country. Here a new urban battle-front has erupted."

Professor W.E. Brownlee of the University of California pointed out that in actual fact President Johnson spent not more than 2 per cent of the gross national product on the War on Poverty program.

In 1968, a great mass of Black Americans lost faith in the possibility of peaceful liberation from racism. Dr. Martin Luther King, an advocate of peaceful means of Black liberation struggle, never lost hope for a better future—even at the lowest point in the Black people's destiny. In 1963, after racists exploded a bomb in a Birmingham church, with 4 young girls dead and 23 schoolchildren wounded, King said that one must not lose hope, one must not lose faith in white brothers.

But, although King personified the peaceful protest move-

*A Great Society?*, ed. by Bertram M. Gross, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York and London, 1968, p. 5.

ment against the racist regime, he differed from many Black leaders in his desire to unite the Black movement with the white workers' movement. As Henry Winston pointed out, Dr King "saw that the basis for regaining the offensive was working class strength", and working-class action in coalition with other groups of white Americans.<sup>1</sup>

The movement led by Dr. King went against the grain of the ruling circles, and King himself was regularly persecuted, particularly when he began to denounce imperialism and the war in Vietnam. Just 2 months before his death, in his speech at the *Freedomways* memorial meeting for Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, King warned that racism and imperialism could not be fought with anti-communism, to which bourgeois propaganda resorted.

King headed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. A march on Washington was planned which, in the view of the council of that organization, had to be made as peaceful as possible. At the beginning of April, Dr. King came to Memphis, Tennessee. He knew that unrest had started in the city. On the day of his arrival, the relations between the police and Black youth reached a breaking point.

Demonstrators poured into the streets of the city. 4 thousand National Guards appeared on the scene. The police used tear gas to disperse crowds. One person was killed and 60 were injured.

The march on Washington was to have started on April 22, but it was not to be: on April 4, 1968, when King appeared on the balcony of his hotel, he was shot and killed.

On the next day, the coffin bearing his body was brought from Memphis to Atlanta, Georgia, King's native city. April 8 was declared to be a day of national mourning. One clergyman reproached, with very good reason, some of the statesmen hurrying to pay their last respects to Dr King, accusing them of insincerity. A man who had been thrown into prison 24 times was suddenly appreciated. Gus Hall made this statement: "To honor Rev. King is to destroy

<sup>1</sup> H. Winston, "The Crisis of the Black Panther Party", *World Marxist Review*, December 1971, p. 28.

the racist system of Jim Crow now. To honor Rev. King is to tear out, root and limb, every vestige, every act of discrimination and segregation practiced against Negro Americans now. It is a sad day for all Americans. It is a shameful day for white Americans."<sup>1</sup> 150 thousand Black and white Americans took part in King's funeral in Atlanta. Huge rallies were held in memory of the leader in other cities of the country. On his gravestone, the words are inscribed: "Free at Last. Free at Last. Thank God Almighty I'm Free at Last."<sup>2</sup>

In those days of mourning, the situation in the country was extremely tense. Large army units were summoned by the authorities to stand by ready for action. Suffice it to mention that nearly 40 thousand troops held in check the anger of the Black masses of Washington, Chicago and Baltimore. *Herald Tribune* reported that nearly 12 thousand federal troops, including paratroopers and Marines, came out against the rebels in Washington.

A *Pravda* correspondent reported from Washington that the soldiers occupied literally the whole of the city, establishing check points and cutting off Black areas from the center. 13 thousand infantrymen pushed into the mutinous area. Intermittent shooting lasted a whole week. 29 Blacks were killed, 900 wounded and 4,223 arrested.

The President scratched a trip to Honolulu: there was shooting barely two blocks away from his residence.

In 1967 and 1968, Black riots raged in more than 200 cities. There were 192 dead and more than 8 thousand wounded. To investigate the causes and consequences of the riots, President Johnson set up a Special Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, a Democrat, was appointed its chairman, and New York's Mayor Lindsay his deputy. There were senators, mayors and police chiefs among the Commission's members, as well as president of the United Steelworkers of America J.W. Abel, NAACP executive director Roy Wilkins and the President's personal representative Cyrus Vance.

The Black riots gave a bad fright to the ruling class.

<sup>1</sup> *The Worker*, April 9, 1968, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Coretta S. King, *My Life with Martin Luther King Jr.*, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, 1969, p. 334.

Its representatives expressed their displeasure, though not too loudly, at the parlous state of the USA to which the President and Congress had brought it. The country which took it upon itself to enforce law and order in Asia, Africa and the Middle East proved to be incapable of maintaining law and order at home. Jingoists called for reprisals against the rebellious Afro-Americans. Bourgeois propaganda described the Black masses' actions in defense of their civil rights as "criminals on a rampage", "criminal mutiny", "violence" and a "social revolution". Even some conservative labor union papers, as has been noted, were not averse to attacking the Blacks.

6 days after the assassination of Martin Luther King, the House of Representatives passed the Civil Rights Bill and sent it to be signed by President Johnson. Andrew J. Biemiller, AFL-CIO Legislative Director, appealed to the Federation members to support the bill. It was passed without debate at a joint Congressional session, with 250 Senators and Representatives for and 171 against. In actual fact, the bill was passed under pressure from the Black masses.

#### The Lull of the 1970s. A New Outburst in the South in 1980

Compared with the level of 1967 and 1968, there was a lull in the Black movement in the 1970s. Afro-Americans had to retreat in the face of combined opposition. Black leaders regarded that period as a temporary respite. But the racists would not leave them alone and provoked fresh local conflicts, as, for instance, in Boston and Chicago.

The biggest Black action took place in Boston. On July 24, 1976, a Sunday, a crowd of white racists decided to drive away Blacks and Puerto Ricans from the Garçon Beach and pelted them with stones, so that they had to defend themselves. The police supported the hoodlums. In the summer of 1977, there were riots again. The Black community of Columbia Point was attacked by a local racist organization spearheaded by the Ku Klux Klan. The whole of the Black population of Boston took to the streets, demanding an end to the provocation. Clashes lasted a whole week.

In Chicago, racist mobs were openly getting ready to attack a peaceful demonstration of Blacks. The police arrested

3 demonstrators, charging them with disorderly conduct.

In 1972, 10 activists of the civil rights movement in Wilmington, North Carolina, were put on trial on a trumped-up charge of plotting against the government and setting fire to public buildings. Rev. Benjamin Chavis, a well-known civil rights leader, was among those arrested. 8 students were arrested together with Rev. Chavis; the tenth defendant was a white woman, Ann Shepard. The trial was marked by violations of elementary legal norms. Chavis was sentenced to 34 years' imprisonment, 3 students—to 31 years each, and 5 to 29 years each. Shepard was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment as their accomplice. The Wilmington Ten were sentenced to a total of 282 years in prison.

The obvious injustice of such a sentence caused widespread protests not only in the USA but also throughout the world. In February 1976, after the court refused bail for further appeals, all ten were jailed. In October of that year Allen Hall, the main witness for the state prosecution, admitted that his evidence had been sheer fabrication, given under pressure from the attorney's office. On October 13, 1976, the lawyer defending the Wilmington Ten demanded that the case be dropped or have another hearing in view of the witness retracting his statement. Simultaneously, all the accused demanded bail.

Now the whole world knows just how the Wilmington Ten were framed. American author Claude Lightfoot said in an interview that the facts and the evidence indicated clearly that it was a frame-up, and that the accused had committed no crimes. But they were still in jail, while North Carolina state authorities refused to review the sentences.<sup>1</sup>

The 1970s were marked by numerous terrorist acts committed by racists against the Black population. In Yonkers, N.Y., on August 10, 1979, the home of Tom and Audrey Porter was blown up.<sup>2</sup> In Alabama, Ku Klux Klan members organized a march on Montgomery, the state capital. In New Rochelle, N.Y., in August 1979, white policemen were murdering Black youths. It became such a scandal that the FBI had to start investigation of the numerous police crimes in New Rochelle.

<sup>1</sup> *Izvestia*, February 15, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, August 11, 1979, p. 3.

There are a great many people in the USA who like to preach on the subject of human rights. From McCain Prison in North Carolina, Rev. Ben Chavis wrote of this with great indignation on behalf of "the millions of oppressed, the Wilmington Ten and all political prisoners of conscience and all victims of racial injustice in the United States of America... There is in the United States no effective remedy or procedure to rectify the denial of fundamental political, civil and human rights of political prisoners of conscience." He appealed "for human liberation, justice and freedom... for the elimination of racism, apartheid and genocide, for an end to world hunger and starvation, for an end to human exploitation and imperialism, for the strengthening of detente, total nuclear disarmament and world peace, and for international solidarity, respect and love".<sup>1</sup>

Only in mid-December 1979 was Rev. Chavis allowed bail, and a promise was given that the Wilmington Ten case would be reviewed.

The events in Boston, Chicago and Wilmington represent yet another shameful page in US history and an indication of the gap between the slogans proclaimed by the bourgeoisie and the reality.

Gus Hall wrote that the 1960s had been a period of hope and promise. Referring to the results of the fight waged by Blacks and other colored people, he pointed out that in those years they had won the right to elect and be elected to official posts and attend schools together with whites. In many states they had won the equal right to use transport, restaurants, parks, beaches and other public amenities. In Detroit, Coleman Young, a Black man, was elected Mayor. 6 of the 9 members of the Municipal Council were Afro-Americans, as well as police chief W. Hart, superintendent of public schools A. Jefferson, and most district inspectors of public schools.

And yet, there was little change in the life of the Black population of Detroit. A group of Soviet authors surveyed the composition of the municipal bodies in 11 Southern states in 1964-1974 and concluded: "All no doubt

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, October 29, 1977, p. 3.

indicates that the Black people's liberation struggle brought them gains in the socio-political area. However, the electoral successes are very relative. Blacks, constituting 11.3 per cent of the total population and some 9.5 per cent of voters, in 1974 filled only 0.1 per cent of all elected offices in the country."<sup>1</sup> These improvements are therefore no more than an illusion of progress. For nearly 10 years the Black people were influenced by these illusions.

The respite, whatever of it there had been, ended in May 1980. This time open struggle flared up in the Southern states of Alabama and Tennessee. Clashes broke out in Tampa and Miami, and then spread to Rightsville and Long Beach; on July 31, a revolt started in Orlando, Florida. These events were very much like the battles of 1967 and 1968. The main similarity lay in that the causes were the same: unemployment, discrimination, oppression and police brutality against Blacks. Any American city may become a new Miami, said Rev. Jesse Jackson.

The May riots in Miami were sparked off by actions of the local police: Arthur McDuffie, a Black man, committed a traffic offense while riding his motorbike and became a victim of police brutality. To justify their crime, policemen falsified the record of McDuffie's death. The jury's verdict declared the murderers to be innocent, and that kindled the fire of racial conflict which had long smoldered in Miami. Six months later a hearing was held; 24 witnesses gave evidence that showed up the court's bias, and still the jury found all policemen not guilty.

On May 17, 1980, when the verdict was made public, crowds of indignant Blacks attacked the court building and the attorney's office. On the same night, the whole city was enveloped in flames. Racists fired at Black residential areas and ran people down in their cars. Fires raged for 3 nights and days in Miami. 19 people died and 350 were wounded in the riots which had been provoked by police brutality and the court's injustice. President Carter sent the US Attorney General to Miami "to restore justice".

Afro-Americans refuse to suffer the oppression and racial

<sup>1</sup> *The USA: Aggravation of Social Conflict and the Mass Democratic Movements*, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1980, p. 162 (in Russian).



discrimination. As Congressman McCloskey rightly wrote: "Racial hate ... is our greatest national shame and our most persistent sickness... It is potentially the most wrenching of our domestic problems."<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RANK-AND-FILE MOVEMENT IN THE US TRADE UNIONS IN THE 1960s AND 1970s: PROBLEMS IN IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

#### The Socio-Economic and Ideological-Political Premises of a New Rise in the Rank-and-File Movement

The movement of the rank and file opposing the conciliatory line of the top union bureaucrats is in itself nothing new in American trade-unionism. Moreover, that movement continued practically uninterrupted, and some of its events must undoubtedly be counted among the more outstanding features in the proletarian struggle in the USA. Suffice it to recall here the struggle of the rank and file against the military intervention in Soviet Russia and for the recognition of the first socialist state in the world, their struggle for a third party in the early 1920s, or the history of the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations in the turbulent prewar decade, the 1930s.

The rank-and-file movement usually goes on the rise in periods of aggravation of class contradictions in American society. It is not surprising then that the growing crisis of US state-monopoly capitalism at its present stage fomented the divisions in the labor movement and opposition attitudes among the rank and file. This process was greatly affected by a number of causes derivative from the dynamics of the structure-forming factors: development of new branches of the economy, migration of the labor force, demographic shifts, etc. The AFL-CIO leadership proved to be unprepared for and unwilling to take into account the new tendencies and problems, whose social consequences were manifested with particular force in the crisis of the early 1980s.

The rank-and-file movement began to gain ground in the late 1960s. Little by little, it fulfilled three important tasks. First, it increased the number of organized workers involved in vigorous social activity at various levels; second,

<sup>1</sup> Paul N. McCloskey, Jr., *Truth and Untruth. Political Deceit in America*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1972, p. 149.

it focussed the discontent with the existing situation in the labor movement, creating the potential for the development of a progressive, democratic tendency; and third, it facilitated the working out of new ideas, concepts and slogans. When one takes into account the considerable difficulties that had stood in the way of such activities for years and years, starting with the period of McCarthyism, it will become clear why the leadership of the US Communist Party and all who uphold the militant traditions of the American working class highly appreciated that initiative. They saw it, and still see it, as an important premise of overcoming the consequences of the long stagnation and ideological subordination of the working-class movement to the bourgeoisie, of the domination of trade union "economism" in the higher echelon of the labor movement.<sup>1</sup>

The alarmed response of the bourgeois circles to signs of change in the behavior and very nature of trade union activity and in the top leadership of the AFL-CIO was also an indication of the new mood among the rank and file; it showed that the middle and some of the top-ranking officials were trying to adapt themselves to this growing activity. "Several leaders of affiliated unions," *The New York Times* wrote in 1977, "have publicly called on Mr. Meany to step down for the good of the labor movement. New leadership, those critics say, is needed for innovative policies to appeal to the new generation of young workers and to develop fresh ideas."<sup>2</sup> Meany's departure in the fall of 1979 was no surprise to anyone. Even the conservative press explained it by the pressure of the forces maturing within the organized labor movement.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, there were plenty of signs in the first half and in the mid-1970s of increasing democratic developments in the US labor movement. These were reflected in the bargaining for new contracts with employers, in the growing strike movement in the leading industries, in mass actions against unemployment and inflation, as well as in the increased interest for the key problems of current interna-

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, July 1979, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, December 8, 1977, p. A18.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily News*, November 15, 1979; *The New York Times*, November 15, 1979, p. A28.

tional politics, for the problems of war and peace. It should be stressed, in particular, that the dissatisfaction of rank-and-file workers was caused not only by distress in their own home, so to speak, but also by disappointment in the two bourgeois parties. In 1978, the American press wrote of the workers' growing revulsion at the sharp practices in the game of politics at the national level.

It is generally recognized that the sharp deterioration in the position of, and the growing discontent among, the US working class in the 1970s were engendered by the critical situation in the economy, increasing competition in world markets, and Washington's policies detrimental to the workers' interests. However, the fall in the living standards in the late 1960s and downright poverty in the social and physical senses were not the only causes of change in the self-consciousness of the American working class. Increased restrictions on social mobility (whose negative consequences began to tell already in the mid-1960s), due to a combination of the skyrocketing cost of professional training and the crisis in general education under the conditions of the ongoing revolution in production, came to be acutely perceived by great masses of the working people as inevitable derivatives of social inequality impossible to eliminate under capitalism. Rationalization of production, introduction of robot systems and other technological innovations now threaten the job security of skilled white-workers and employees, sharpening their feeling of social vulnerability arising from the disharmony of the production relations and destroying the illusions of eternal prosperity and the myth of the American way of life.

Today, even many conservative researchers have to admit that these new elements in worker psychology have taken root and are bringing about an increase in the number of wildcat strikes<sup>1</sup> arising, as a rule, from a desire to control not only the laws of the movement of wages but also the nature of labor and labor relations as a whole. Accordingly, the workers' economic struggle itself, assuming

<sup>1</sup> R.J. Flanagan, G. Strauss and L. Ullman, "Worker Discontent and Work Place Behavior", *Publications of the Institute of Industrial Relations*, Berkeley, 1974, p. 101. Even in the early 1960s, strikes of this type were little known at US factories.

new forms and new content, more and more often reveals a tendency toward a broader range of social action by various categories of hired workers, who only recently either showed no activity at all or obediently followed their conservative leaders. The numerous polls and studies of recent years confirm this conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the above that the coming of a new generation in the 1970s in the labor force in general and the trade union movement in particular cannot in itself explain the workers' growing opposition to the old leadership and to obsolete methods of solving the pressing and increasingly complex tasks of socio-economic development. Duly taking these factors into consideration, Gil Green correctly pointed out that the mood of the younger generation in the working class should be linked, above all, with the *general* conditions in which its world view is formed.<sup>2</sup> Characteristically, the signs of growing activity of the trade union rank and file and the formation of opposition trends and factions in the unions coincided with a major credibility gap with regard to the bourgeois socio-political institutions of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the gravest in the history of American capitalism. This was brought about by the war in Vietnam, the shattered confidence in the economic possibilities of the "affluent society", moral degradation, and corruption in politics, the educational system and the unions. Many of these phenomena were brought into sharp focus by the Watergate affair.

For many years, both the new and the old generation of the working class have nearly equally suffered from the passive attitude of the AFL-CIO leadership. Because of this attitude the trade union movement, which rapidly grew and won important positions in the 1930s and 1940s, has now lost its militant spirit, becoming a secondary factor in national politics.<sup>3</sup>

The results are there for all to see: nowadays, only

<sup>1</sup> See D. Georgakas, M. Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1975; E. Rothschild, *Paradise Lost: the Decline of the Auto-Industrial Age*, Random House, New York, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> G. Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> G. Meyers, "Labor in the '80 Elections", *Political Affairs*, April 1980, pp. 6, 7.

20 per cent of the total work force in the USA are organized in trade unions, a fall of 12 per cent compared with 1955. The trade unions suffer defeats in a vitally important sphere: a vote to set up or dissolve a union all too often ends in victory for the corporations. In recent years, the trade union movement has actually lost all the important legislative battles in which it tried to make the White House and Congress change the existing labor laws in its favor by persuasion and lobbying,<sup>1</sup> while the fierce anti-union campaign waged by the corporations under the open shop slogan threatens in the absence of strenuous opposition from the AFL-CIO leadership to thrust the unions back to the mid-1920s, when they were on the verge of breaking up.

Thus, the labor movement is challenged on many sides, but the focus of the conflict lies in the contradiction between the growing authoritarian power of the monopolies and the working people's interests. Their dependence on the arbitrary rule of big business is growing, while small-scale operations and progress at a snail's pace, imposed on the labor movement by the AFL-CIO leadership, leave no hope for finding a way out of the dead end, for overcoming the inertia. The realization of this fact helps to crystallize left-wing and democratic trends in the unions.

After World War II, opposition to present-day Gompersism became at times quite prominent. In some trade unions the adherents of a revision of the old line succeeded in removing trade union bosses that had compromised themselves by servility toward capital and had turned their elected positions into a profitable business. As a rule, the platform of the opposition had a number of points that went beyond the traditional "complaints" of the unions. These included, first and foremost, extending such workers' rights as the seniority principle, control over the introduction of technological innovations, and the establishment of a system of benefits.

But manifestations of politically motivated discontent were much rarer and weaker; they were mostly sporadic outbursts of disagreement with the openly conservative course of the AFL-CIO Executive Board on vital political issues.

<sup>1</sup> D. Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979, p. 170.

The left-wing opposition's attitudes made themselves felt in the second half of the 1960s in connection with the upsurge in the struggle for the Black people's civil rights, although their sources can be traced back to earlier times—the protest against the McCarthy witch-hunts, support for the legalization of the Communist Party, etc.

It is a generally recognized fact that the mass democratic movement of the 1960s, particularly the student movement, made a strong psychological and ideological impact on the labor movement. Less well known is the independent role played by left-wing groups in dispelling the illusions of a possible compromise with capitalists and in spreading anti-capitalist ideas among workers. These experiences and their lessons are extremely instructive.

#### Political Radicalism: the Hard Quest for an Ideological Position

The late 1960s are an important landmark in the history of the present-day rank-and-file movement. Before that, it had largely been emotional and, one might say, ethical being mostly directed against the immorality of the union bosses involved in rackets and all kinds of sharp practices. The relatively high level of employment and on the whole high living standards in the mid-1960s kept the discontent within those limits, preventing the rank-and-file masses from seeing the pernicious effect of the policy of class collaboration and from ideological, political and organizational dissociation from the conservative leadership.

In the second half of the 1960s the situation changed. The tendency toward greater organizational cohesion of the left-of-center trend in the US trade unions manifested itself in the setting up of assemblies, groups, factions (caucuses) and committees of rank-and-file unionists. That tendency was accompanied by growing discontent with various aspects of trade union leadership and, in many cases, opposition to its entire political line.

Even during periods of stagnation in the labor movement, the activities of the United Auto Workers, with their militant traditions going back to the 1930s, were inherently dynamic, so that this union played a major role in most

initiatives of the modern labor movement in the USA, despite the opposition or inertia among the leaders. The vigor of the rank and file has always been the source of that dynamism.

In the second half of the 1960s, the union's leaders headed by Walter Reuther continued that life-giving tradition as they became involved in the Black civil rights movement and the fight against US aggression in Vietnam and against militarism in general. Other expressions of the same tradition were a committed stand on the major national issues, and a rejection of non-interference policy and apolitical attitudes as a shield against the acute problems posed by life itself. In the purely economic sphere, which delighted bourgeois propagandists during the economic boom of the 1960s, the rank-and-file masses also soberly assessed the results attained and were far from complacent. It is noteworthy that UAW leaders were among the first to sound a warning in the mid-1960s about the state of the US economy.

That happened at a time when the liberal encomiums for the "great society" were loudest. That view was sharply at variance with the official position of the AFL-CIO. In April 1967, a convention of the UAW was held in Detroit to discuss economic problems. The convention reflected the unrest among the rank and file and their discontent with the policy of class collaboration. It confirmed the desire to go beyond the narrow limits of the ordinary complaints, which trade union bosses amicably settled with corporation executives with little change from year to year.

As in other industries, the emergence of assemblies and caucuses of the rank-and-file auto workers was nearly always linked with the struggles of Black workers against racial discrimination. At first, their main target was achieving, mostly through wildcat strikes, equality with white workers, putting an end to the cruder forms of exploitation and discriminatory practices of management, and making the union leadership that did not include any Black workers defend more vigorously the interests of those on the assembly line, those who did the most dangerous, dirty, hard and tiring jobs in the hot shops. Draft collective settlements now included provisions for controlling the speed of the assembly line, organisation of labor at the workplace, setting production quotas, guaranteed employment, a

more just distribution of jobs between Black and white workers, equal pay for equal work, improvement of safety on the job, a system of measures for raising the overall status of the Black worker, etc. The demand to "Humanize and Civilize the Plants" became very popular.<sup>1</sup>

Most significantly, a new generation of leaders, who had gone through struggles against racial discrimination in various progressive and radical organizations, came to head the rank-and-file movement in the auto industry. The socialist ideal was congenial to them, although both the ideal itself and the mode of its attainment often appeared to them in a distorted form, as guesswork, or as left-extremist dogma. Of great importance was the founding in 1967 of the newspaper *Inner City Voice* in Detroit, which became the mouthpiece of a militant group of young radical workers. In 1968, organizations for uniting Black workers appeared at the Big Three plants.

The initiative of the Detroit Black radicals found support in many industrial states, acting as a catalyst of militant attitudes among the union masses, helping to shape a new ideological climate, and fostering criticism of the conciliatory tendencies and veneration for the values and fetishes of the bourgeois world. It was due to this criticism that both Black and many white workers could at last see the American way of life in its true light and realise the depth of class divisions in the country, the gap dividing the old trade union bosses from the rank-and-file masses, and the social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution under capitalism.

The protest riots in the Black ghettos in 1967 and 1968 showed the true depth of social inequality in American society, accelerating the formation of radical groups in the trade unions, particularly among the Black members. In Detroit alone, about a dozen relatively small but militant left-wing groups emerged. They insisted on the need to put an end to racial discrimination at automobile plants, to achieve equal rights for Black and white union members, and proclaimed a readiness to head a social revolt aimed

<sup>1</sup> W. Allen, G. Meyers, "The UAW Prepares for Action", *Political Affairs*, June 1967, pp. 15, 16.

at a radical change in property relations and liquidation of the exploitation of hired labor, of oppression of man by man.

At first, the Revolutionary Movement at the Chrysler and Ford Motor plants borrowed their slogans mostly from the ideological arsenal of the theoreticians of black separatism and nationalism. Although left-extremist concepts and tactical orientations were a heavy burden on the nascent movement, many of its leaders arrived at correct conclusions on important questions of strategy and tactics of fighting racial oppression and capitalist exploitation, despite the confusion caused by the half-baked ideas of petty-bourgeois ideologists like Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X, Imamu Amiri Baraka, George Padmore, James Foreman, Eldridge Cleaver, Paul Sweezy, and others.<sup>1</sup>

For instance, the programmatic documents of the Black radicals at the Detroit plants included the idea (though not always clearly expressed) of the historic mission of the proletariat as the principal motive force in the struggle for a society without exploiters and against exploiters, free from racial and national oppression.<sup>2</sup> "Our short-range objective," said one of the official statements of the leaders of the Revolutionary Movement at Detroit plants, "is to secure state power with the control of the means of production in the hands of the workers... Our long-range objective is to create a society free of race, sex, class and national oppression, formed on the humanitarian principle of from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."<sup>3</sup>

This and other similar statements bore traces of ethnocentrism and underestimated the real complexities of the

<sup>1</sup> For a critique of the petty-bourgeois theoreticians see Chapter IX of the present volume. See also *Political Affairs*, February 1968; H. Winston, *Class, Race and Black Liberation*, International Publishers, New York, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> "Our Thing Is DRUM!", reprinted from *Leviathan*, June 1970.

<sup>3</sup> "The General Policy Statement and Labor Program of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, 1970", W. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Vertical File, League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

struggle; they indicated a desire to leap over these difficulties, as it were. The focus, however, was on the material roots of the existing class antagonisms, on the need to eliminate the oppression of man by the means of production he himself created, and to fight for a socio-economic order that would ultimately ensure the all-round and harmonious development of society as a whole and of all its individual members. The leaders of Black caucuses actively advocated public ownership of the means of production.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted in particular that, unlike the petty-bourgeois ideologists with their orientation toward the middle strata, the students and even the lumpenproletariat, the Black caucuses of Detroit recognized the decisive role of industrial workers both in the liberation struggles of the Black people and in the fight against capitalist exploitation in general. The key position of industrial workers in the country's economy, in its leading industries (steel, automobile, coal and others), they said, left no doubts about where the principal forces were to be assembled and what the organizational strategy and role of industrial workers would be in the fight against racism, capitalist exploitation and imperialist policies of the US ruling circles.<sup>2</sup> Only in the factories, in the coal mines and among transport workers could the movement for radical change in America find the support and the power that would make it invincible and victorious. "A union of workers is power," wrote the newspaper of the Black caucuses in 1969. "They can, if they so decide, control the economy of a country as large and powerful as the USA simply by calling a general strike."<sup>3</sup>

The similarity between the ideological and organizational principles of the radical movement of the Black workers in Detroit in the late 1960s and the platform of revolutionary anarcho-syndicalism of the early 20th century has already been pointed out by a number of scholars.<sup>4</sup> Just as

<sup>1</sup> *Inner City Voice*, February 1970, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Inner City Voice*, June 1968; *Ibid.*, November-December 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from D. Georgakas, M. Surkin, *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-80.

the legendary Wobblies, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), they failed to overcome, for instance, the influence of petty-bourgeois and even lumpen ideology, and to rise to a *true* understanding to the historic mission of the working class, i.e., to the realization that this class can free itself from the yoke of capital only by freeing the whole of society from it. The narrow class positions of the IWW became, as is well known, their Achilles' heel. The same positions, taken up by the Black radicals and aggravated by their ethnocentrism, seriously weakened their influence beyond the plant gates. Besides, the two trends also had in common the dangerous inclination to raise to an absolute certain tactics or forms of struggle regardless of the changed conditions, and to exaggerate the importance of some traits of capitalist development, failing to see their interconnections.

Following that path, the Black radicals, just as the Wobblies before them, raised one-sidedness to the status of theory. Thus, the IWW regarded industrial sabotage and "direct action" (general strike, boycott, picketing) as universal means of undermining and abolishing the system of capitalist exploitation, whereas the Black radicals set great store by verbal recognition of individual terrorism and guerrilla warfare against "white capitalism" as the main instruments of struggle.

Harping on "fierce fighting" being near at hand, the Black radicals lost sight of the fact that that call might be interpreted as an appeal to ignore the general democratic tasks and intermediate phases of the movement as inconsistent with the "real" struggle for socialism. Gus Hall wrote of this erroneous path to socialism: "If one sees the path lined with bull-horns, and record players, repeating slogans and rhetoric of the need to overthrow capitalism, then, of course, it is not necessary to consider such realities as monopoly domination, because 'capitalism is monopoly and monopoly is capitalism'. On the other hand, if one sees the path to socialism lined with people in struggle over the issues that pain them most, fighting and learning to recognize the real class enemy, becoming conscious of their own class power, and in the process being taught about socialism,



then the anti-monopoly struggles become indispensable."<sup>1</sup>

The similarity between the IWW and the radicals of the 1960s is thus obvious, but so is the difference. Most of the IWW did not realize that class struggle becomes consistent and fully developed only when it embraces the area of politics. Relying on "direct action" alone, the Wobblies rejected political activity and the need for a political party of the proletariat.<sup>2</sup> The attitude of the Black radicals to politics was more complex, changing in the course of the struggle. In principle, Black caucuses recognized the necessity of a political organization of the working class, although at first, in self-assured recklessness, they saw themselves as a kind of prototype of a future party capable of heading the struggle against oppression. As they pinned their hopes on spontaneous revolt or explosion, there was no need for them to consider seriously the key problem of what that party should be like in organizational structure, ideological and political principles, strategy and tactics. Only later was the idea of a "vanguard" party suggested, its membership restricted to the Black proletariat.<sup>3</sup>

Having thus arrived at the basically correct conclusion, the need to develop the highest form of the labor movement, the political form, the Black radicals then drifted toward the idea of an isolated political organization of the Black minority with the exclusive right to represent Black workers and their interests. Yet, experience refuted these claims and this unsound strategy put forward on behalf of socialism but based on the idea of racial superiority. Gradually, even many of the ardent supporters of this idea could see for themselves that by preaching the principle of ethnic isolation for their party, they legalized and sanctified, as it were, the greatest evil—alienation between Black and white workers.

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, *Imperialism Today. An Evaluation of Major Issues and Events of Our Time*, International Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Ph.S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. IV, International Publishers, New York, 1965, pp. 167-71.

<sup>3</sup> "The General Policy Statement and Labor Program of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, 1970", W. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Vertical File, League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

But, as the movement of the rank and file developed, the "underground" press of the radical caucuses in the unions placed less and less stress on the demand for a revolutionary political party claiming a vanguard role in the struggle with capitalism and imperialism, yet open to Black workers only. The lessons of the crisis of the Black Panther Party at a time when mass movement ebbed, conservative attitudes among certain sections of the population grew and police terror intensified were not lost on the movement. The need to overcome political sectarianism and to act in alliance with the whole of the country's working class was realized. It was this process of overcoming the ideology of ethnic isolation that the Communist Party USA referred to in 1972: "There is also a growing class consciousness among Black workers today. It is reflected in the growing tendency of many groups to draw a distinction between the rich and the poor, between the rulers and the ruled in this country, and to attempt to identify who the rulers are."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the very recognition of the fact that the racial issue in the USA was not restricted to the "We" (Afro-Americans) vs. "They" (the whites) opposition put the Black caucuses in the auto industry head and shoulders above Black separatists, advocating self-determination for the inhabitants of the Negro ghettos, like Roy Innis or Imamu Amiri Baraka. A series of wildcat strikes and other worker actions organized by the Black caucuses at the automobile plants of Detroit in 1967 and 1968 showed that their leaders and rank-and-file militants realized the class basis of racism.

These actions brought out the tendency to draw a distinction between the racist policies of the bourgeoisie and the prejudices of *some* white workers, which made them unwitting accomplices of the exploiting class. Though not yet able to overcome their complex of alienation and distrust of white workers, the Black caucuses of Detroit reject-

<sup>1</sup> R. Proctor, "Black Workers and the Class Struggle", *Political Affairs*, February 1972, p. 28. In an earlier article published in November 1970, Claude Lightfoot pointed out that the activities of the Black caucuses reflected the growth of a trend toward Marxism-Leninism. See *Political Affairs*, November 1970, p. 30.

ed, to their great credit, the anti-white extremism of Eldridge Cleaver or Malcolm X. They also declared the possibility of white and Black workers jointly fighting for radical social transformations in the country, as white workers freed themselves from racist prejudices. The documents of the Black caucuses expressed the idea that under pressure from within and without the material basis of racism in the USA would inevitably be narrowed, stimulating unity between Black and white workers.<sup>1</sup>

Studying the lessons of the Black uprisings in the ghettos and learning the true value of the ideas of racial superiority and "two parallel streams" in the labor movement, the Black radicals moved closer, step by step, to a well-thought-out tactical plan for winning over the broad masses in the union movement, a plan that accorded better with the prevailing conditions of the struggle. An important role was played in this process by the Communist Party USA and the National Coordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy, founded in 1970. Their purposeful propaganda work undermined the ideological influence of the pseudo-Marxist elements with their penchant for ultra-revolutionary phraseology and adventurist action.<sup>2</sup> After the assassination of Martin Luther King, the calls "to take up arms" and to declare "sniper warfare" multiplied in Detroit in the spring and summer of 1968, but later this mood subsided, finding no serious support. "To our party," wrote James Jackson in the theoretical organ of the Communist Party USA, "the main new feature of Detroit's uprising was the absence of white versus Black racial violence."<sup>3</sup>

This turn of events did not suit at all corporation owners, who had a stake in splitting the ranks of the working class. As Gus Hall pointed out in his report to the 22nd Convention of the Communist Party USA, the corporations organized anti-union provocations, supporting self-styled "revolutionary" sects at plants which migrated, unhindered,

<sup>1</sup> "Our Thing Is DRUM", reprinted from *Leviathan*, June 1970, pp. 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., J.E. Jackson, "Class Source of Left Adventurism", *Political Affairs*, February 1968, pp. 33-40; R. Proctor, *Op. cit.*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>3</sup> J.E. Jackson, *Op. cit.*, p. 35; see also D. Georgakas, M. Surkin, *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

from industry to industry and incited workers to all kinds of irresponsible actions, acts of vandalism, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Extremism, appeals to arm the whole of the Black population, and individual terrorism<sup>2</sup> gradually lost their adherents. A series of well-prepared actions at automobile plants proved to be very instructive. The young radicals realised that racial and social equality cannot be achieved by a single spurt or effort, through methods that proved ineffective even in Nat Turner's times, as they are essentially a lone heroes' weapon, better suited to defensive than to offensive warfare.

"We didn't understand a lot," wrote in 1970 one of the leaders of the movement recalling the first steps in organizing Black caucuses at auto plants. "We learned. And what we learned after our initial involvement had taken us through two or three strikes is that a program has to address itself to the stage of struggle that you're in... The revolution is not going to be tomorrow. Or yesterday, as Abbie Hoffman or Jerry Rubin have said. Or next week or next month. We have to think in terms of taking as long as is necessary to accomplish the objectives of overthrowing imperialism and racism. We may not see it in our lifetime, and it's hard to understand that. We do not expect to accomplish that kind of job tomorrow. But what we have to do is deal with the stage that we're in... What we had to do was think in terms of long-range planning and building of a movement that would involve Black workers across the country in industry and Black people throughout the community so people could support each other in time of intense struggle."<sup>3</sup>

This statement shows that the ideological arsenal of the Black caucuses contained a component that might, under certain conditions, bring them closer to all the other left-wing and progressive forces in the labor movement and outside it. Despite the setbacks the left radical movement suffered at the shop-floor level because of the extremist rhetoric and underestimation of the concrete historical

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, October 3, 1979 p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Inner City Voice*, March 1968, p. 7; *Ibid.*, April 1968, p. 1; *Ibid.*, June 1968, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> "Our Thing Is DRUM", *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

conditions of the struggle, the activists of that movement were not in the habit of ignoring everyday work needed to improve the condition of the masses. It is therefore not surprising that the programmatic documents of the Black caucuses contained, along with erroneous, muddled and contradictory propositions, a number of sound ideas prompted by the objective logic of the struggle and the real situation.

The claim of the revolutionary Black caucuses of Detroit that they could head the mass struggle for a revival in the trade union movement was not borne out, but the very fact of their emergence gave an impulse to a broader mass movement<sup>1</sup> aiming to unite the Black workers of various trades and industries on the basis of a platform of democratic action acceptable to all. The most promising of all the attempts proved to be the one which led to the setting up of the national Coalition of Black Trade Unionists at the constituent convention in Chicago in September 1972.

The initiators of the new coalition made it clear from the outset that they rejected the "two streams" concept and were not going to set up a separate organization. At the same time, they confirmed the basic task set by the Black caucuses—to attain complete equality of Black and white workers in the old trade unions and increase their role in determining the policy of the leadership of the entire trade union movement in the USA.<sup>2</sup> Expressions of sympathy for political progressivism and condemnation of conservatism also reflected a certain affinity between the ideological positions of the coalition leaders and the Black caucuses.

The coalition's convention of 1978 made yet another step forward by putting forth a comprehensive socio-economic platform which included an appeal for programs to improve the jobs situation for Blacks and other ethnic minorities. It envisaged a tax reform, the setting up of public works funds, a more even distribution of employment, and state

<sup>1</sup> The Communist Party USA approved of certain aspects of the activities of Detroit's Black caucuses, pointing out at the same time the weaknesses that were a drag on the movement.

<sup>2</sup> G. Green, *Op. cit.*, p. 229; see also *Daily World*, September 12, 1972, p. 11; September 16, 1972, p. 3; June 1-4, 1973; S. Platinic, "Coalition of Black Trade Unionists," *Dissent*, Winter 1972, p. 12; *The Nation*, September 7, 1974, p. 170.

supervision of enterprises to put an end to management abuses in capital investment and production policy. A resolution was passed in support of the efforts of the peoples of Africa to destroy the remnants of colonialism by any means at their disposal, including armed struggle. The convention demanded the introduction of a state system of public health services, supported the bill on labour legislation reform and a set of measures to eliminate the existing inequality of Black Americans.<sup>1</sup>

In practical terms, the Black caucuses became a source of energy for the trade union movement in several leading industries, and even restoring to that movement the function of protecting workers' rights. Their protest against conciliatory attitudes and stagnation, their demand to hand control over the unions to those whose interests they are intended to represent, and finally their desire to link up their movement with far-reaching plans for social change indicated the possible alternatives to "class collaboration" and greatly promoted the political education of the working masses. Their propaganda work certainly made an impact on the minds of the working people. The *Daily World* wrote at the time that the real significance of the Black caucuses would become fully apparent in the future, when the labor movement became the leading politically conscious force of anti-capitalist struggle.

#### From Protest Against the Policy of "Class Collaboration" to the Idea of Democratic Control Over Production

In the mid-1960s, the movement of the rank-and-file unionists led to the defeat of a number of old leaders, often unexpected for the leaders themselves. Interestingly enough, the bourgeois press pointed out at the time that the cause of discord between the rank and file and the old leaders was the idea of mutual trust, or, in other words, the unwillingness of the rank and file to follow the strategy of "class peace"—the formula of collaboration between labor and capital which made the unions an appendage of monopoly management.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, May 31, 1978, p. 5.

There was a change of leadership in the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, in the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, in the Rubber Workers' Union, etc., although such replacements did not always result in overall changes for the better. Despite the expectations of the rank and file, many trade union associations were again headed by politicians brought up in the worst traditions of "business trade-unionism". Still, the viability of the general trend proved to be greater than the efforts from within, and from without, to suppress it. That was the main point, and the most promising one. The dramatic struggle of different trends in the United Mine Workers' Union illustrates this most convincingly.

The struggle of the rank-and-file miners in the late 1960s and early 1970s against the corrupt clique heading the United Mine Workers' Union and led by Boyle was in many respects symbolic. In 1970, Miners for Democracy, a rank-and-file organization, was set up. It openly set itself the task of putting an end to Boyle's dictatorship and of restoring democracy in the union. The slogans that fomented and cemented the movement which in 1972 brought victory to Arnold R. Miller did not at first go beyond the ordinary demands. But the movement itself soon outgrew them, giving a powerful impulse to the search for new ways and means of fighting the defeatist policy of "class partnership".

The miners urgently demanded the right, for instance, to be included in the discussion of hiring conditions, and insisted on introducing a three-stage procedure for working out and ratifying the provisions of union—employer agreements, with obligatory endorsement by local meetings of the rank and file. The new leadership of the United Mine Workers demanded, above all, trade union control over safety on the job, over health services and social security for miners' families, thus upholding a labor movement not only capable of defending its rights but also intending to influence issues vital for the whole nation.

The rank-and-file movement in the coal-mining industry revealed an important feature: decisions involving the position of workers in production are no longer the monopoly of a narrow group of leaders. The struggle for participation in such decisions has become universal, as has the rank-and-file movement itself, which was never restricted

to a single locality, race or industry. The fact that it was never a movement of low-paid groups of blue collars only, but always included workers of all trades and professions, even the most privileged ones—steelworkers, government employees, truck drivers, urban transport workers, municipal workers, teachers, etc.—this fact now lends special weight to the demand that workers have a greater say in the whole sphere of production. This frightens the employers and the government, who realize that the rank-and-file masses, only recently disunited and concerned solely with their narrow professional and local interests, are now uniting in a nationwide struggle for their rights thus posing a major threat to monopoly capital.

The workers' new approach to labor and labor relations objectively creates favorable conditions for overcoming the split in the working class. Although the greatest obstacle in the way of working-class unity has been and still is the distrust and alienation between white and Black workers (the Black caucuses were also guilty of following that pernicious tradition), this dangerous tendency has grown weaker in recent times, and the ties between workers of different color are becoming stronger. This is, perhaps, most clearly manifested in the steel industry, where racial discrimination as recently as the early 1970s gave rise to acute conflicts and dramatic situations in which the union mostly played a negative role.<sup>1</sup> The union leaders' inactivity and indifference to the destinies of rank-and-file workers during the recession in the steel industry, when production fell and unemployment grew, caused considerable unrest among the masses, which brought closer together various left and centrist groups and factions.

The Black caucuses in the steelworkers' union also declared their sympathy for the kind of political radicalism that became the ideological banner of the Black caucuses in Detroit. That platform can be outlined as follows. The working class is a suffering class, and Black workers bear the main burden of exploitation, whose anti-social nature (capitalist profit-chasing, a handful of wealthy men profiting from

<sup>1</sup> Ph.S. Foner, "Organized Labor and the Black Worker in the 1970s", *The Insurgent Socialist*, Fall 1978, pp. 87-95.

the labor of the majority) makes it illegitimate and therefore subject to elimination. The inhuman working conditions, deteriorating economic position, and racial oppression compel the Black workers to fight for their complete liberation. In this fierce fighting, the workers will help themselves by achieving radical changes in the system of social and racial relations. They have no other way out but organized struggle with the entire capitalist system. "As you can see," wrote the newspaper of rank-and-file steelworkers of Gary, "Black workers have always been in the struggle from hour to hour and day to day. Some are not conscious of the role that they play in human and social development. But as they become more conscious they are moving to fulfill their historic mission as the gravediggers of this unjust system. Unite, organize and struggle. There can be nothing without organization."<sup>1</sup>

It is hard to say how strong the influence of these ideas has become, or is becoming, among the masses of steelworkers, both Black and white, but the gradual increase in the cooperation between left and moderate trends in the steelworkers' union speaks for itself. By the mid-1970s, these groups achieved important successes on the basis of a common platform and a joint list of candidates for executive posts in the major locals and in the struggle for removing the union bosses of the highest echelon headed by Abel and his henchmen. At the 1974 elections in District 31 (Chicago-Gary), Edward Sadlowski, the candidate of the rank and file, won the majority vote. In preparation for the forthcoming elections of the union's leaders, a coalition of the left and center was then formed, which nominated Sadlowski and Montgomery as candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency.<sup>2</sup>

The platform of the left and center group that took shape around the candidate list would seem to be a most adequate reflection of the mood of most union members who, having rejected the concept of "class collaboration", began to search for a positive program of social action envisaging greater democracy in taking major decisions at plants

<sup>1</sup> *Point of Production*, August 1971, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, August 1978, pp. 4, 5.

and in the economy as a whole, and a greater role for the unions in controlling production.

The positive part of Sadlowski's program was built on the declarations of militant progressive trade unionism well known in the 1930s: to serve those who need collective protection from capitalist oppression, and not those who are bought and corrupted by capital. The significant reference to the link between the tradition of the steelworkers' struggles and the tasks of the day indicated a desire to break away from the disgraceful baiting of all that was alive and innovative, all that was associated with political radicalism—the kind of baiting the union leaders in the 1940s and 1950s practised. The orientation toward "class collaboration" and the long-compromised policy of cadging concessions from the bosses were rejected decisively and irrevocably.<sup>1</sup> The leaders of the rank and file advocated a new style of leadership in the union. The fight against corporation owners became their motto, and unity of the rank and file—white and Black, men and women—their most powerful weapon. The lifting of all restrictions on strike action was regarded as an important condition of restoring the union's ability to protect the interests of workers.

The concrete part of the rank-and-file steelworkers' program was centered on economic demands. But in some of the points there were promises to fight for more substantial reforms. Thus, the program spoke of the need for revising military budgets,<sup>2</sup> the importance of expanding the representation of the Black people, people of mixed race and women in the decision making by the union leadership, restoring the principles of democratic procedure within the union at all levels, fighting gangsterism, corruption, etc. The fight against what Sadlowski referred to as "tuxedo unionism" was linked with the struggle against the political domination of the corporations, for worker representation in the upper echelons of power.

<sup>1</sup> *Steelworkers Fight Back*, Newsletter, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> On a number of occasions Sadlowski approved the movement against the arms race and in support of the agreements between the USSR and the USA on strategic arms limitation. See *Daily World*, May 11, 1977, p. 2.

In 1977, the left and center movement suffered a defeat in the struggle for the post of president of the United Steelworkers of America. The reactionaries within and outside the union mobilized all their forces to prevent its victory. The bourgeois media presented the movement as "Red" and as good as communist.<sup>1</sup> Two circumstances, however, must be taken into account: first, 40 per cent of the union membership voted left; second, among those who voted left were members of the largest locals including workers of the leading plants. But the temporary setback of the rank-and-file movement in the steel industry did not result in its demoralization and decline (as had happened before). The present situation rather resembles a lull before a new round in the battle between the two opposing ideological and political concepts, each of which now has approximately equal chances.<sup>2</sup>

Significant in this respect were the results of the annual conference (June 1978) in District 31 (Chicago-Gary). The conference supported a resolution demanding the nationalization of the steel industry, the reduction of the work week without loss of pay, the workers' right to ratify collective agreements, and the extension of the functions of the Civil Rights Committee in order to combat more effectively discrimination against Blacks, young people and women.

Because of its ideological cohesion, the rank-and-file movement in the car industry was more consistent in its demand for trade union control over the entire set of working conditions in the industry. Following rapid rise in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the rank-and-file opposition in this leading branch of the American economy entered a new phase, developing into an influential pressure group.

At the union's conventions and in the periods between them, the various trends within that group often emerged as a considerable force with which the executive board of the union headed by Douglas Fraser had to reckon. They took turns proposing packages of economic and political

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, November 11, 1976, pp. 2, 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, April 3, 1980, pp. 10-11; *Political Affairs*, August 1978, p. 5.

demands, some of which were aimed at changing the political and social structure of society through limiting the power of the monopolies. The practical measures they proposed included the nationalization of a number of basic industries and the introduction of comprehensive democratic control over production, accounting and distribution. To stifle this mood, the union leadership resorted to flexible maneuvering, sometimes even borrowing certain slogans from the left-wing opposition.

A qualitatively new level of demands marked the next stage in the rank-and-file movement. Thus, a new group calling itself the United National Caucus (UNC) took shape in the early 1970s in centers of the car industry. At first, its principal slogan was the demand for rank-and-file control over the entire set of the working conditions. Although anti-racialism was recognized as a leading principle, discriminatory practices were mostly condemned on moral and ethical grounds, without reference to the class roots of that phenomenon.

In the area of politics, too, the plans of the UNC also did not at first go beyond the aims set by the leaders of the auto workers' union: "immediate withdrawal of American troops from Southeast Asia and all other foreign soil"; "slashing the military budget" and increasing the funding of social welfare; raising the taxes on the wealthy; "organization of a political vehicle which can genuinely base itself on this program and that overwhelming majority of Americans whose interests it reflects".<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 1973, *Detroit Free Press* wrote that the UNC had become the principal opposition force in the Auto Workers' Union. The newspaper did not mention the fact, however, that there were new elements in the UNC approach to problems of the labor movement and national development as a whole. And these changes were considerable. They became fully apparent at the 1974 convention of that union, where UNC representatives acted as a compact group, tabling a number of important resolutions sponsoring workers' independent political action through the creation

<sup>1</sup> The W. Reuther Library, Vertical File, United National Caucus, 1972, "A Short Study in Black and White", p. 10.



of a mass labor party, nationalization of energy resources, organization of the unemployed, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The growing instability of the US economy in the second half of the 1970s and a new serious recession called for new slogans and demands. The radical significance of these proposals was emphasized by the sharp criticism of the government by members of the UNC. Thus, the UNC program published in January 1975 envisaged important measures to resolve the main problem—growing unemployment. It was proposed, among other things, to stop the practice of dismissals and moving plants to other areas, to introduce a 30-hour work week, to ban overtime, speed-up, etc. Companies that could not keep up employment at a proper level would have to be handed over to the state and reorganized on the worker control principle. "If they [the corporation owners.—*Author*] can't or won't run the plants and keep the people on the job, then the workers can. If the bosses can't do their job right, it is they who should be laid off. Nationalize their corporations under the control of the workers."<sup>2</sup>

Endeavoring to keep their grip on the union's affairs, the leadership had to reckon with the mood of the rank and file. The positions of Douglas Fraser and his associates became a kind of barometer indicating the mood of a growing number of workers in one of the leading industries of the USA. At the 1979 convention of the union, Fraser criticized the oil monopolies for their prices policy and expressed himself in favor of a nationally owned energy corporation capable of competing with private companies.<sup>3</sup> In connection with the threat of the Chrysler corporation going bankrupt, the union Executive proposed that the state should consider buying a controlling stock of that auto giant.<sup>4</sup>

Fraser was not at all afraid that these proposals would damage his reputation in the eyes of the skilled workers amongst whom he had grown up as a trade union leader. The rank-and-file auto workers had themselves demanded

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, October 1974, pp. 17-18; *Network. Voice of UAW Militants*, June-July 1975, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Network. Voice of UAW Militants*, April-May 1975, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Labor Notes*, July 21, 1979, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *In These Times*, November 7-13, 1979, p. 3.

that the oil industry should be nationalized. As for Chrysler, its position was hopeless. Without government interference it was headed for a catastrophe. That was why Fraser recognized the need for partial socialization as a way out of a long-drawn-out crisis. At the same time, he opposed workers' participation in the implementation of such a measure. According to the 1979 contract between the auto workers and Chrysler, Fraser became a director of the corporation but, in return, the union gave up the demand for partial nationalization of that decrepit giant.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the aggravation of the internal and external contradictions of American capitalism in the mid-1970s, the prospect of increasing economic difficulties, and further polarization of class interests gave rise to certain new features in the rank-and-file movement. There was a growing interest for problems of regulating the macroeconomic processes, reforming ownership, restructuring the federal budget, and redistributing incomes. The issues of foreign policy, disarmament, and the threat of a nuclear catastrophe now attracted increasing attention. The critique of the trade union leadership became increasingly socially oriented, acute and profound. The rank and file demanded a revision of the old ideas and theories built entirely on liberal symbolism and aimed at merely refurbishing the existing system. This mode of thinking was now recognized as obsolete and fruitless.<sup>2</sup> In many publications of the rank-and-file movement the inability of capitalism to overcome the increasingly catastrophic disruptions of its economic life was stated as something quite obvious and unavoidable under the old order. In this connection, the idea of planning is no longer formulated in these organs in the traditional neo-liberal spirit, but in the context of demands for changes in the basic institutions of society, in the context of political struggle for the real levers of power. "We are in the early stages of a long-term crisis which affects all the capitalist countries," wrote the author of an article in a rank-and-file movement's organ. "Even Woodcock and Co. are beginning to understand this. Their program says: 'An uncoordinated economic system

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Network. Voice of UAW Militants*, April-May 1975, p. 7.

no longer is acceptable to society and to the community... Every segment of our economy today is run by plan. But the economy as a whole drifts like a ship without a rudder.' We agree that a planned economy is vitally necessary to ensure a reasonable standard of living for all. But a plan by itself doesn't ensure these results. We must ask: planning by who, and in whose interests?" (*Network. Voice of UAW Militants*, April-May 1975, No. 2, p. 7). This recognition of the political, class nature of the measures for regulating the economy was an important new development in the mass consciousness of the rank-and-file movement in the unions.<sup>1</sup>

It would of course be wrong to assume that by the late 1970s all criticism by the rank-and-file movement was founded on the need for eliminating the principal sources of the contradictions of capitalism. In the country as a whole, it was still more usual to hear demands for lessening the worker's dependence on the production patterns fully controlled by the employers and managers. But the raising of the issue of imposing strict limitations on the arbitrary rule of the monopoly managerial mechanism was in itself a major step forward for the rank-and-file movement. In this way, it bolstered the workers' determination to go beyond the traditional demands for partial improvements in hiring conditions, and encouraged them to extend their control to economic management, i.e., to win the right to determine overall economic and social policy in the interests of the working people.

Demonstrations and wildcat strikes against lay-offs and closures of "uneconomic" plants, introduction of new technology, and cutbacks in social welfare are evidence of the workers' unwillingness to accept a system that suits the owners and makes the workers mere appendages of machines. In all cases the starting point of the new approach, wrote Gus Hall, has become the premise that decisions on production problems and working conditions are no longer the exclusive prerogative of managers; these issues are no longer resolved on the managers' say-so or through deals between the owners and the trade union leaders. "Workers' control over the machines is a legitimate demand... In general,

<sup>1</sup> See *In These Times*, October 23-30, 1979, p. 13.

the nature of the new problems facing the working class narrows down to areas of management prerogatives and increasing the areas of workers' control."<sup>1</sup>

The divisions within the rank-and-file movement due to a variety of causes determined the differences of opinion on ways to achieve democratic control which were proposed as the key idea. The spectrum of opinion varied from projects that seemed to have been borrowed from "Guild Socialism" to anarcho-syndicalist appeals for workers to take control over certain industries through "direct action" or threat of sabotage,<sup>2</sup> without any further explanations as to how the plant, the industry and the economy as a whole should be managed in the interests of the entire people.

It is easy to see, however, that the flow of muddled theories was more and more often interspersed with well-thought-out proposals on the system of measures for the workers to achieve more effective control over production, to master the secrets of managing it and of using the productive forces better from the workers' standpoint, and to create certain premises for replacing the power of the monopolies by a progressive political and economic democracy following the path of comprehensive and imaginative reforms in the people's interests.

These proposals included election of factory committees for implementing control and opening the companies' financial accounts to them; non-interference of the government and the owners in the union's internal affairs; a decisive say for the workers in matters of capital investment, in particular those of plant transfer; a ban on overtime; election of special commissions of workers' representatives to consider labor productivity, the content of labor, its organization and workloads regulation; giving the unions the right to control the appointment of foremen, shift and section managers; a decisive revision, under union control, of the entire system of work force training with a view to

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, *The High Crimes and Misdemeanors of Monopoly Capitalism*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1974, p. 32. See also: Th. Dennis, "Some Problems Facing the Auto Workers", *Political Affairs*, March 1974, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Wildcat. Dodge Track*, June 1974, p. 30.

its democratization; a ban on discriminatory practices at plants; the unions' right to make decisions on all issues, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the rank-and-file movement or, to be more precise, of its ideological, political and ethical principles on the whole trade union movement might be the theme of a special study. We cannot consider here all the details of the struggle for replacing the old leadership of the American trade union movement, a seesaw struggle in which the success of either side was uncertain for various reasons, political and economic.

Neither is it possible to describe here all the dramatic events of Sadlowski's campaign in the steelworkers' union, or of the struggle for the setting up in October 1978 of the Progressive Alliance on the initiative of the auto workers. Let us point out, however, that the spontaneous initiative of the rank-and-file auto workers, miners, steelworkers, and workers of other industries enlivened the US union movement. The rank and file did not fight for personality changes in the leadership only; they were striving toward a greater goal—restoring the traditions of progressive unionism that would not shut itself off from political radicalism and the socialist ideal. That is why there is nothing surprising about the attempts (though mostly unsuccessful) by some locals to reopen a number of the closed factories in areas of economic distress by buying them from the owners and organizing worker cooperatives.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit of resistance, of search and hope, inherent in the rank-and-file movement, brought new workers' leaders to head several major unions, leaders capable of thinking in terms of national problems and uninfected by the virus of political prejudice which paralyzed the will of the labor movement and stood in the way of learning from the international experiences of the struggle with monopoly domination.

An active position on a number of most important issues of the labor movement was taken by the new leadership of the influential union of machinists, elected in 1977.

<sup>1</sup> *The Militant Auto Workers*. Newsletter of the Militant Solidarity Caucus of UAW Local No. 906, March 15, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> *In These Times*, June 27-July 3, 1979, pp. 12-14; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 5, 1979, p. 15.

They repeatedly spoke in favor of limiting the power of the monopolies and bold intervention of the workers' movement in politics as an independent force. The union's leader Winpisinger, elected President of the Citizen-Labor Energy Coalition, speaking during a national debate on energy in the spring of 1979, insisted on taking national energy policy out of the hands of private capital and placing it under the control of society as a whole. To achieve that goal, he suggested setting up state-owned oil and gas companies capable of competing with private companies, thereby protecting the public from being continually robbed by the monopolies.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1980 election campaign, Winpisinger resolutely condemned the monopoly domination in politics, demanding that an end be put to the dependence of the executive and legislative authority on the moneybags. In his view, "the current resident of the White House" (the reference was to the then President Carter), who had won with the help of workers, reneged on his populist program, trading it in for the loyalty of big business and its financial support.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America in recent years furnished yet another example of the fruitful influence of the rank-and-file movement on the healthy tendencies in the unions, on improving their public image and increasing their authority. In 1977, an acute struggle led to the replacement of the Woodcock group by leaders who respected the mood of the masses. In some of his speeches Douglas Fraser was compelled to criticize the anti-labor policy of the monopolies, the government, and Congress, calling for a general regrouping of the labor movement forces to gain greater political independence. Of great importance was the national conference of more than a hundred major trade unions and public organizations held in Detroit on October 17, 1978 and intended to "consider forming a new alliance aimed at transforming the

<sup>1</sup> *In These Times*, June 20-26, 1979, p. 9; *Political Affairs*, December 1978, p. 15; *Daily World*, May 2, 1979, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, March 7, 1980, p. 7.

American political system by making it more accountable, responsible and democratic".<sup>1</sup>

Both Fraser's statement on the opening of the conference in Detroit and his speech at the conference echoed the political demands and slogans of the rank and file and the middle echelon of union leaders, who were largely in agreement with the mood of the rank and file.<sup>2</sup> He said, for instance, that the conference marked the beginning of an offensive on two related fronts. That offensive was aimed, first, at a new approach to the people's social and economic needs, and, second, at improving the functioning of the American political system and political parties. Explaining his position, Fraser said that the political system was not working, as evidenced by the failure of the Democratic Party to carry out its 1976 election promises. The reactionary forces and the monopolies, he continued, were "aggressive and winning too many battles"; the task of the labor movement was to "start counterattacking and fighting back".<sup>3</sup>

Noteworthy is the considerable response to the initiative of the new leadership of the auto workers' union, despite its cool reception by the AFL-CIO upper bureaucrats. In essence, the organizers and participants of the conference in Detroit acted on behalf of the forces which believed that the US labor movement must not only actively fight capital but also consolidate its gains through political means—by pushing through the necessary legislation.

Now, as never before, the US labor movement faces acute problems of their world view, ideology and politics. Their significance in the unions' everyday life has also grown manifold. Like a breath of fresh air they need a theory of social change adequately reflecting the present stage in the development of US state-monopoly capitalism and offering a substantiated forecast for the future. Only Marxism-Leninism can provide such a theory. However, the socialist ideal has not yet become the leading feature of mass political consciousness of the American working class.

<sup>1</sup> G. Meyers, "The Sharpening Battle for the Ballot", *Political Affairs*, December 1978, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, October 26, 1978, p. 3; *The Washington Post*, October 15, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily World*, October 26, 1978.

So much the greater is the significance of the rank-and-file movement, whose challenge to the philosophy of subordination to capital and reconciliation with the reality asserts the urgency of the debate on the progressive social ideal, raising at the same time the general level of the economic struggle for the concrete goals and interests of various sections of the population. It would be naive not to see the obstacles on this path, both objective and subjective. But it would also be wrong to underestimate the unobtrusive, latent, but extremely important work by inner forces in the American labor movement preparing qualitative changes in the consciousness of the masses, in their ideological and political orientation.

CHAPTER VII  
THE STRUGGLE IN THE LABOR UNIONS  
ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES  
(THE 1960s AND 1970s)

The AFL-CIO During the Escalation of US Aggression  
in Indochina

The aggressive foreign policy of American imperialism, pursuing its global plans through stepping up international tension and creating hotbeds of war, was most clearly manifested in the second half of the 1960s in the escalation of US aggression in Vietnam.

The war of the United States against the patriotic forces of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia ended in a defeat for the invaders. It demanded enormous material expenditure and considerable sacrifice in human life on the part of the USA. In the years of the aggression in Indochina, United States losses amounted to hundreds of thousands of killed and wounded. The war also left its mark on the USA itself: inflation increased, the prices of the essential commodities rose and taxes grew.

The imperialist adventures in Indochina caused indignation of the American public. Hundreds of thousands joined the protest movement against the government's aggressive actions. This mass movement became national in scope.

But the US ruling circles' foreign policy was supported by the AFL-CIO leadership. Its approval of US aggression in Indochina fully accorded with the anti-communist and anti-Soviet views of Meany and his associates, who did everything they could to win the approval of the labor unions of the USA and some other countries for the American aggression in Southeast Asia. Under pressure from Meany, the 6th Convention of the AFL-CIO in December 1965 passed a resolution approving the measures "to halt Communist aggression". That resolution on Vietnam, as Philip Foner correctly stressed, "was a clear signal to the Johnson Administration

that it could continue escalating the war without being concerned about organized labor's reaction".<sup>1</sup> When the anti-war movement emerged in 1966 in the American unions, Meany did his best to suppress it, to confuse and intimidate its participants. To achieve this objective, he started a debate at the 1967 AFL-CIO Convention during which his adherents accused the anti-war campaigners of helping the enemy of the USA and threatened to deal with them.

After a wave of protest against the expanding aggression in Indochina swept the nation in May 1970, the AFL-CIO leaders stepped up their fight against the anti-war movement. As George Morris wrote, the AFL-CIO leaders "counted on the craftist, racist-influenced, leadership of the building trades, their major base".<sup>2</sup> On instructions from the AFL-CIO headquarters, the latter attacked anti-war demonstrations in New York, beating up their participants, and staged their own noisy chauvinistic demonstrations in New York, Baltimore and St. Louis.

The bourgeois media treated these events as a sensation. President Nixon also contributed to the campaign. To express his gratitude he attended a session of the AFL-CIO Executive Board and received a delegation of the Building and Construction Workers' Union at the White House; in September 1970, he gave a reception there for the AFL-CIO leaders on Labor Day and, as we have already noted, appointed Peter Brennan, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of New York, Secretary of Labor.

In the second half of the 1960s, Meany and his followers stepped up their anti-Soviet campaign intended to distract the attention of the world public from the crimes committed by the US military in Southeast Asia. The anti-Soviet positions of the AFL-CIO leaders were most clearly outlined in the pamphlet written by Jay Lovestone in the late 1960s, *Who Is the Imperialist?*<sup>3</sup> in which all the progressive changes

<sup>1</sup> Ph.S. Foner, *American Labor and the Indochina War. The Growth of Union Opposition*, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> G. Morris, *Rebellion in the Unions. A Handbook for Rank and File Action*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Who Is the Imperialist?*, 4th ed., AFL-CIO Publishers, June 1974. Between 1964 and 1974, Jay Lovestone headed the AFL-CIO Department of International Affairs. Before that he had been head of AFL-CIO international publications and Meany's adviser on international affairs.

in the world, brought about by the Socialist Revolution in Russia, the defeat of fascist Germany and militarist Japan, the peoples' struggle against capitalism and the victory of national liberation movements, were said to confirm the expansionist character of communism. The peoples that had thrown off the yoke of capitalism and colonialism were presented by Lovestone as victims of "Soviet imperialism".

Denouncing that wholesale falsehood, Gus Hall wrote that it was similar to "Hitler's big lie... As it was with Goebbels, so it is with Lovestone. The more U.S. imperialism is exposed, the bigger gets the big lie."<sup>1</sup> All the other statements on international issues based on these positions of the AFL-CIO top bosses were marked by the same kind of open anti-communism and anti-Sovietism.

To justify the aggressive foreign policy of American imperialism, Meany and his henchmen endeavored to spread distrust for the Soviet government's initiatives aimed at the relaxation of international tension, consolidation of peace and establishment of mutual understanding among peoples. They mounted attacks on the treaty between the USSR and the FRG signed in Moscow on August 12, 1970, condemned the agreements concluded between the socialist and capitalist countries in the 1960s and early 1970s, called on the US government to reject the demands by some American politicians (such as Senator Michael Mansfield) to withdraw American troops from Europe, and insisted that the US government should compel its NATO allies to increase their military spending. The Meany group urged more funds for the Free Europe and Liberation radio stations, as well as for the Captive Nations Assembly and other anti-Soviet emigrés' organizations. The AFL-CIO leaders supported Israel's territorial claims and its aggressive actions against Arab peoples.

In regard to the international labor movement, conservative US union leaders have always followed the policy of dividing the unions on the national and international scale. They rejected all contacts between the American

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, *Imperialism Today. An Evaluation of Major Issues and Events of Our Time*, International Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 345.

unions and those of the World Federation of Trade Unions and objected to visits of Soviet trade union delegations to the USA and participation of American unions in the international public organizations in which Soviet unions take part.

Owing to the position taken by the reactionary American labor leaders, since the time of the October 1917 Revolution and up to the fall of 1977, no Soviet trade union delegation (with but one exception) was able to come to the USA on an official visit. The single exception was the visit of a Soviet Central Council of Trade Unions delegation to the USA in July-August 1945 at the invitation of the CIO. A delegation from the CIO paid a return visit to the Soviet Union in October 1945. The AFL-CIO international department cooperates closely with the US State Department in barring any visit to the USA by representatives of Soviet trade unions. That resistance could not be overcome even by US Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, who in 1966 supported a visit by a Soviet engineering workers union delegation at the invitation of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. After many months of struggle, the UAW succeeded in arranging a visit by that delegation in April 1977, but only as members of a tourist group. "The State Department," wrote *The New York Times* in May 1976, "has apparently given the A.F.L.-C.I.O. the right to veto all applications by Soviet and other Communist trade union leaders to enter this country... Ernest Lee, director of international affairs of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., confirmed ... that the A.F.L.-C.I.O. routinely opposes visas to any trade union leaders from the Soviet Union."<sup>1</sup>

The newspaper of the Soviet trade unions *Trud* wrote: "The American authorities treat the Soviet trade union workers in a discriminatory and insulting fashion, even if they come not as trade union members but in other capacities."<sup>2</sup> In the early 1970s, the State Department also established restrictions on visits to the USA by functionaries of Soviet trade unions invited by organiza-

<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*, May 27, 1976, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Trud*, May 27, 1976.



tions other than the unions. Granting visas to Soviet trade union delegations arriving in the USA at the invitation of non-union organizations, the State Department invariably accompanied them by notes to the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs specifying that the members of the delegation had no right to establish contacts with American labor unions.

The State Department's support for the AFL-CIO leadership even after the signing of agreements on the development of cultural and business cooperation between the two countries shows that the US government endeavors to prevent any contacts between US and Soviet labor unions and to keep the US working class from making a positive contribution to the development of Soviet-American relations.

#### **Expanding Cooperation Between AFL-CIO Leaders and the Foreign Policy Bodies of the US Government**

The AFL-CIO leaders campaign to enlist the support of Latin American labor unions for US policies through the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) founded in 1962.

In the 1960s, the AFL-CIO leadership stepped up its efforts to win the support of trade unions in various areas of the world for American imperialist actions in foreign policy. American unionist bureaucracy persisted in its efforts to use the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to help US monopolies to establish themselves in Africa. The European colonial powers still clung to their former possessions and did not want American monopolies to supplant them there. On this question, the governments turned for support to the Social-Democrats linked with ICFTU members. At a time when the African peoples stepped up their fight against neocolonialists, the AFL-CIO not only helped American monopolies to gain influence in the newly independent countries but also tried to prevent their transition to the non-capitalist path of development.

In 1965, the AFL-CIO bosses came to the conclusion that the ICFTU was not a reliable partner in implementing US policy in Africa. Lovestone set up an African-American Labor Center (AALS), and US labor unions

became more active in Africa. Meany became the chairman of the AALC, and its executive director until 1974 was Irving Brown who had a long record of subversive activities in the international labor movement. The AALC is an organ of the governmental Agency for International Development (AID) and the CIA. It sets up and mobilizes organizations and looks for political leaders to oppose Communists and other left elements.

Following the US setbacks in Vietnam, the AFL-CIO leaders founded in 1968 the Asian-American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI) charged with monitoring the activities of trade unions in Asian countries, particularly in the Middle East. Meany became chairman of the Institute, and Gerald O'Keefe its executive director; O'Keefe was one of those AFL-CIO operatives in Guyana who helped to overthrow the Cheddi Jagan government.<sup>1</sup>

The AAFLI engages in intensive ideological campaigns among union leaders and membership in Asia, especially in the Middle East. This work encompasses unions in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Cyprus, South Korea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Turkey.

As Meany said at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on August 1, 1969, one of the most important tasks of the "educational" activities of the AFL-CIO foreign policy bodies was anti-communist indoctrination of the membership and leaders of foreign trade unions and teaching them methods of fighting communism. The US government, for its part, highly appreciates the AFL-CIO subversion in foreign trade unions.

Apart from the AIFLD, AALC and AAFLI, the AFL-CIO leaders also interfere in the work of trade unions of other countries through international trade union secretariats linked with the ICFTU. The American media reported that the AIFLD was the principal trade union cover for CIA agents in Asia and Latin America.<sup>2</sup>

Meany and other heads of the international organs of the AFL-CIO repeatedly tried to refute reports about that

<sup>1</sup> G. Morris, *Rebellion in the Unions. A Handbook for Rank and File Action*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *The Washington Post*, February 23, 1967, pp. 1, A-9.

kind of cooperation. However, a ramified system of links between the union leadership and the CIA is a reality.

After the scandalous disclosures of the links between the CIA and the AFL-CIO and other public organizations in the USA, President Johnson issued on March 29, 1967 a directive forbidding secret handovers of money to non-governmental organizations by governmental agencies. In accordance with the President's regulations, the AFL-CIO foreign activities were openly financed by the AID. The regulations did not at all mean cuts in the government subsidies for these activities. The new arrangements even extended the scope of cooperation between the government and the unions.

The facts thus show that the relations with the unions established by President Johnson did not at all interrupt the CIA's subversive activities in the international trade union movement or the cooperation between the top AFL-CIO leadership and the CIA.

The AFL-CIO bodies engaged in international activities are mostly funded by the government, which annually hands over more than \$5 million to the AFL-CIO to finance the work of the AIFLD, while the AALC and the AAFLI annually get over \$1 million each from the same source.<sup>1</sup> Besides, beginning with 1968, the AID annually gives \$1 million to the AFL-CIO unions for work in the international trade union secretariats. The US government also finances the unions' programs of exchanging delegations with unions of other countries.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the US government spends in all about \$10 million a year on the AFL-CIO international activities.

Relying on the AFL-CIO leadership's support of the policy of expansionism and military adventures, the US government and the bourgeois propaganda assert that Washington's international policy is approved by organized labor. Sidney Lens wrote in this connection that the Meany-Lovestone group did something for the US government which it had been unable to do itself, namely, it created

<sup>1</sup> Ph. Taft, *Defending Freedom: American Labor and Foreign Affairs*. Nash Publishing, Los Angeles, 1973, pp. 222-23; *The Washington Post*, April 21, 1969, p. A10.

<sup>2</sup> *Orbis*, Spring 1975, pp. 100-02.

the "trade union" basis in many countries for the cold war policy. Without the Meany clique, American imperialism would have been more isolated, and the political map of the world would have been much less conservative.

### Union Action Against the US Aggression in Indochina

In the second half of the 1960s, many in the USA came to see quite clearly that the US economy could not provide both guns and butter. The war made President Johnson give up the idea of constructing the much-vaunted "great society". The escalation of the US aggression in Vietnam tangibly affected the position of the American working class, which began to show signs of strong discontent with the administration's policy. This changed the positions of the leaders of a number of unions, who had supported for many years the war-like attitudes of the Meany group. Some of the leaders openly condemned the US aggression in Vietnam.

In May 1966, a labor section of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy was set up in New York on the initiative of labor organizations. Soon, branches of the section were opened in many major cities of the country.

At the conventions some of the AFL-CIO unions held late in May 1966, there were open expressions of discontent at US aggression in Vietnam. The war was most resolutely condemned by the Packinghouse Workers', the Auto Workers' and the Aerospace Workers' conventions. They called for a settlement in Vietnam through negotiations. They were supported by the convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, at which UN Secretary General U Thant called on the unions to campaign for ending US military operations in Vietnam.

In December 1966, a conference of 400 union leaders and activists was held in Chicago at which a branch of the labor section of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy was founded.

Support of the labor section by many labor organizations indicated wide discontent in the labor movement with the US aggression in Vietnam. To unite the anti-war forces in the unions and work out a program of their struggle for ending the war, the labor section of the Committee

convened a National Labor Leadership Assembly for Peace on November 11 and 12, 1967 in Chicago, attended by 523 delegates representing 63 international unions and 38 states.<sup>1</sup>

Participants in the Assembly emphasized that, for the anti-war movement in America to achieve success, it must be supported by the unions, and the Assembly was the first step in that direction. They defined the war in Vietnam as aggression and called on the unions to join the struggle for ending the war.

The development of the anti-war movement in the unions between May 1966 and November 1967 provided evidence of widespread discontent with the policies of Meany and his followers in the AFL-CIO leadership. Yet, in that period the unions did not yet become active campaigners for ending aggression in Vietnam. There were two reasons for that. First, the leaders of the anti-war movement regarded the unions as a conservative force incapable of breaking away from the foreign policies of the Meany group; second, the main body of workers had not yet realized that the war increased their socio-economic difficulties. Many workers still believed the false assumption put forth by union bosses and reinforced by the bourgeois propaganda that expansion of military production improved the working people's living standards. But the rise in the labor movement did a great deal to change the sceptical attitude of the opponents of war to the unions.

In 1968, two events took place which affected both the situation in the labor movement and the attitude of the American public to it: the withdrawal of the United Auto Workers from the AFL-CIO and the setting up of the Alliance for Labor Action (ALA) by the UAW and the Teamsters Union. At the end of May 1969, a constituent convention of the ALA was held which condemned the US aggression in Vietnam.<sup>2</sup> In 1969, a New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (New Mobe) was set up. Its leaders realized that the American working class disapproved of the war and that it could raise the anti-war movement to a new level. Taking this into account, the New

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, January 1968, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, April 15, 1971, pp. 1, 11.

Mobe founders set up a Trade Union Committee within the framework of their organization.<sup>1</sup>

Other anti-war organizations also gradually changed their attitude to the unions. Many of their members came to realize that there could be no mass movement without worker participation. "Build ties with the workers" became a slogan of the radical student movement. Many student organizations began to help striking workers. The solidarity of the anti-war and student organizations not only helped the striking workers in their struggle for the economic interests but also helped to expand the anti-war attitudes among the workers. They took an active part in the national anti-war demonstration on October 15, the greatest in US history, and in the march on Washington on November 15, 1969. Hundreds of thousands of workers took part in these actions, as did a number of leaders of AFL-CIO unions, the breakaway organizations in the ALA and the unions expelled from the CIO in 1949.<sup>2</sup>

Hundreds of unions paid for newspaper ads demanding an end to the war.

Nixon's order to start the US intervention in Cambodia and Laos made an even greater impact on the union movement. As has already been noted, Meany and his following vigorously supported that stage in the escalation of aggression. The authorities had their full support as they organized the assaults on the anti-war demonstrations in several cities. But many union members and leaders took an active part in the demonstrations. The anti-war sentiment was so strong among the workers that Meany and Lovestone had to give up the plan they had for staging a demonstration in support of the war in all major cities.<sup>3</sup> Such a demonstration, organized by the Building and Construction Workers Union, was held only in New York.

Some of the leaders of the AFL-CIO, spurred on by the indignation of the American public, spoke out against expanding the aggression in Indochina and the intervention

<sup>1</sup> Ph. S. Foner, *American Labor and the Indochina War. The Growth of Union Opposition*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily World*, March 11, 1971, p. 5.

in Laos and Cambodia. The Convention of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, opening on May 7, 1970, passed a resolution condemning the US war in Vietnam and urging "immediate and total withdrawal of all U.S. armed forces from Southeast Asia".<sup>1</sup>

In late May, at the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America convention, its president Jacob Potofsky came out with condemnation of war. The unions already involved in the anti-war movement attacked the new escalation of aggression and demanded immediate cessation of the war. Walter Reuther, in a cable to Nixon, indignantly denounced the American intervention in Cambodia and Laos and demanded that the President ensure peace at home and abroad; on May 8, the union council in California representing 400,000 members passed a resolution accusing the US President of violating the Constitution, and demanded that he be called to account; on May 9, a declaration was published signed by 451 union leaders sharply condemning the new stage in the escalation of aggression.

In May 1970, the unions started independent anti-war actions. Committees to end the war were set up at union locals and anti-war strikes were called. Union-sponsored anti-war demonstrations continued in the summer of 1970. In mid-June, 13 international unions set up the National Labor Committee to End the War. On June 27-28, 1970, a conference was held in Chicago to support the rank-and-file union members' actions, and 875 delegates to the conference formed a National Coordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy. Union rank and file declared that one of the main tasks of the unions was to end the war in Indochina. They sharply criticized the view that Meany expressed the workers' opinion.<sup>2</sup>

The rise of the anti-war movement in the USA in the spring and summer of 1970, in which organized labor took an active part, was one of the important factors which compelled Nixon to announce a withdrawal of troops from Cambodia. But union struggle against US aggression continued right up to the signing of an agreement on ending the

<sup>1</sup> Ph.S. Foner, *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Labor Today*, July-August 1970; *Daily World*, June 27-30, July 11, 1970.

war and restoring peace in Vietnam on January 27, 1973 in Paris.

An important event of that period was a very representative anti-war conference of the unions held on June 22-23, 1972 in St. Louis, Missouri, attended by 985 official delegates from 35 international unions. The Labor for Peace movement was initiated there, setting itself the task of not only fighting to end the aggression in Indochina but also of preventing afterwards a repetition of the events taking place in Vietnam. The delegates declared their intention "to bring into our midst ever-broader sections of the trade union movement in an effort to turn our country from the path of killing and destruction to the path of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness through peace, dignity and full employment".<sup>1</sup>

The Labor for Peace representing 4 million organized labor helped to set up anti-war committees in the local branches and repeatedly appealed to the President and congressmen demanding an immediate cessation of the war in Vietnam.

American workers increasingly came to realize that they were the first victims of the war. They reacted indignantly to reports of the crimes of the American troops in Vietnam. Their opposition increased as the mass anti-war movement grew. In 1967, 34 per cent of union members were against the US involvement in Vietnam, while in 1971 this view was held by 64 per cent, and by the summer of 1972, 79 per cent.

The unqualified support by the Meany group of the US aggression in Southeast Asia did not express the mood of the mass of American workers. The overwhelming majority sympathized with the anti-war movement. "The struggle of the American people against the imperialist aggression is without precedent in our country's history," wrote Gus Hall. "It is an expression of our anti-imperialist consciousness."<sup>2</sup>

### The Withdrawal of the AFL-CIO from the ICFTU

After the founding of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in 1949, US labor leaders endeavored

<sup>1</sup> *The Nation*, July 10, 1972, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Gus Hall, *Imperialism Today*, p. 243.

to establish their sway over it and to place it in the service of American imperialism in the fight against the forces of democracy, peace and social progress. However, they came in conflict with the workers of Western Europe and other areas of the world protesting against militarism and increases in the military spending and supporting international relations based on the principles of peaceful coexistence. Many members of the ICFTU came out in support of the Soviet Union's peaceloving policy and established, despite pressure from the AFL-CIO leaders, links with Soviet trade unions. The World Federation of Trade Unions in every way fostered the resistance to the policy of militarism and the arms race. The influence of Communist parties on the ICFTU grew.

The AFL-CIO policies within the ICFTU caused growing discontent among members of the Confederation. It grew especially after Meany and his followers lent their support to US aggression in Vietnam. Many ICFTU members condemned US action in Indochina. At the 1965 Congress of the ICFTU, Meany failed to push through a resolution in support of American policies in Indochina.

In the 1960s, several major ICFTU organizations publicly condemned the positions of the AFL-CIO top leaders, who refused to take into account the interests of the confederation. The American historian John P. Windmuller wrote that in the mid-1960s "American insistence on the continued primacy of the struggle against communism throughout the world has led to a widening gap between the ICFTU's professed beliefs and the practices of some of its member organizations".<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that in the second half of the 1960s the relations between the AFL-CIO leadership and the ICFTU were also affected by the growth of the anti-war movement in the USA and the conflict between the United Auto Workers and the Meany group. It may thus be stated that the policies of the right-wing union leaders in the USA caused disapproval not only in the trade unions of other

<sup>1</sup> J.P. Windmuller, "Cohesion and Disunity in the ICFTU: The 1965 Amsterdam Congress", *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, April 1966, p. 360.

countries but in the USA itself. The disclosures about the cooperation of the Meany group with the CIA also increased frictions between the ICFTU and the AFL-CIO. These disclosures clearly showed that the US union bureaucracy betrayed the interests of the working class of the whole world, pandering to American imperialism.

Meany and his group did not conceal their annoyance at the unwillingness of the ICFTU members to follow their dictates. In protest against the contacts between the ICFTU and the Soviet trade unions, the AFL-CIO delayed payment of its dues to the Confederation. In the mid-1960s, Meany tried to insist, without success, on setting up a new department in the Confederation, intended to combat communism.

After the withdrawal in 1968 of the United Auto Workers from the AFL-CIO, Meany hastened to declare that that union had lost its membership in the ICFTU as the AFL-CIO represented, according to him, the entire American labor movement. In that way he tried to isolate the UAW internationally. However, the ICFTU leadership accepted for consideration the union's application for its membership to be restored. Meany fiercely fought against the admission; on December 16, 1968, Meany announced that unless the ICFTU rejected the union's appeal, the AFL-CIO would boycott its work and suspend the payment of its annual dues.<sup>1</sup> Under this pressure, the ICFTU rejected, on February 11, 1969, the UAW application, but at the same time it refused to comply with another of Meany's demands—condemning the UAW for the break with the national center.

At a press conference on February 20, 1969, Meany announced the AFL-CIO decision to withdraw from the ICFTU. In explaining the reasons he said that practically all major trade unions in Europe neglected the ICFTU principles and were conducting the policy of rapprochement with the East through exchanging delegations with Soviet trade unions. He cited visits to Moscow by dozens of delegations from the FRG, Great Britain, Italy, Belgium. The issue of UAW admission to the Confederation had been only the last drop. At the same time, he stated that despite the withdrawal from

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, December 20, 1968, p. 9; *AFL-CIO News*, December 21, 1968, pp. 1, 2.

the ICFTU, the AFL-CIO would not discontinue its activity in international affairs. On the contrary, it would continue very vigorously in that field using toward that purpose the \$360,000 previously used as its dues to the ICFTU.<sup>1</sup>

Some members of the ICFTU (in particular, the British Trades Union Congress and the Israeli Histadrut) urged the return of the American union center. Under pressure from these bodies, ICFTU General Secretary Harm G. Buiter sent in March 1969 a letter to Meany requesting him, on behalf of the executive council, to revise the withdrawal decision.

Talks were held between the AFL-CIO and the ICFTU in June and October 1969 and later in February 1970. On February 17, 1970, Meany declared that, since there was no question any more of the admission of the UAW to the ICFTU, there were no more obstacles to the return of the AFL-CIO. In his view, the two sides at the negotiations only had to resolve the problem of the ICFTU's attitude to the issue of the relations with the socialist countries; in other words, he intended to induce the ICFTU members to recognize the positions of the Meany group in foreign policy.

But nothing of the sort happened. Late in May 1970, a trade union delegation from the Soviet Union visited the FRG at the invitation of the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB), the German Association of Trade Unions. That was a return visit: in June 1969, a DGB delegation had visited the USSR. The Soviet delegation and the DGB continued the exchange of opinions begun in Moscow on further development of contacts between the trade unions of the two countries at all levels. They expressed the conviction that there was a number of areas of trade union activity where they might usefully exchange experiences.

That visit offered yet another proof that the ICFTU leaders refused to be pressured by the AFL-CIO leaders. Meany therefore did not go to Geneva in June 1970 to continue the negotiations with the ICFTU leaders and, on September 1, 1970, recalled his representative Morris Paladino,

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 5, 1969, p. 6.

the Confederation's deputy general secretary, from the Brussels headquarters of the ICFTU.

Statements by leaders of ICFTU unions on the AFL-CIO withdrawal showed that the activities of the Meany group on the international scene had entirely ceased to accord with their interests. The AFL-CIO decision on the withdrawal from the ICFTU, commented Georges Debunne, Secretary General of the Belgian Fédération Générale du Travail, proved that the USA endeavored to thrust its policies on the trade unions of other countries through American unions.

Commenting on the AFL-CIO withdrawal, the American magazine *The Nation* wrote in an editorial: "Meany's action signifies liberation from his control and dictation... At the very least, the withdrawal of AFL-CIO from the ICFTU is one more sign of the disruption of the cold-war mechanisms that seemed so enduring."<sup>1</sup> The AFL-CIO withdrawal from the ICFTU signified a serious defeat for the US right-wing union bosses.

### Trade Unions and Detente

At its 24th Congress in 1971, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union set forth a Peace Program. As was pointed out at the next, 25th Congress, the essence of the program was to "achieve a turn in international relations with reliance on the might, unity and dynamism of world socialism, on its closer alliance with all progressive and peace-loving forces—a turn from cold war to peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, a turn from explosive tensions to detente and normal, mutually beneficial cooperation."<sup>2</sup> Stating its determination to redouble its efforts in carrying out that policy, the 25th Congress adopted a program of further struggle for peace and international cooperation, for freedom and independence of the nations.

The policy of peaceful coexistence and detente became the focus of acute political and ideological struggle. The conservative leaders of the AFL-CIO joined those sections of the bourgeoisie and its ideologists who believe that de-

<sup>1</sup> *The Nation*, March 10, 1969, p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Documents and Resolutions. XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1976, p. 6.



tente is harmful as it opens up new possibilities for socialism and all the progressive forces, and call for a return to cold war policies under the banner of fierce anti-communism and rabid anti-Sovietism.

The AFL-CIO top bureaucracy was in the forefront of those in the USA who opposed normalization of Soviet-American relations. In November 1971, a few days before the opening of the AFL-CIO convention, Meany stated that he could see no chance of success for such a policy, and attacked Nixon's forthcoming visit to Moscow in May 1972. The entire foreign policy of the AFL-CIO bosses was directed against detente. Gus Hall stressed in this connection that Meany and his followers "are the vile anti-detente, anti-Communist cadre in the trade union movement".<sup>1</sup>

The AFL-CIO leaders tried to disrupt the conference on European security and cooperation. In August 1975, Meany pressured the AFL-CIO leadership into introducing in Congress a demand for US rejection of the Final Act signed in Helsinki by President Gerald Ford.

The AFL-CIO bureaucracy actively supports the neocolonialist aspirations of American capital, making slanderous accusations against the USSR to disguise its policy. The AFL-CIO's anti-Soviet campaigns are intended to foster in the US labor unions a hostile attitude to the USSR and its policy in support of the just struggle of the Arab peoples for the liberation of their territories occupied by Israel. In the 1970s, the AFL-CIO in the resolutions and statements of its executive council and conventions called for a rejection of all the Soviet proposals on a Middle East settlement, for expanding US arms deliveries to Israel, for getting NATO to publish a declaration of solidarity with Tel Aviv, and for other steps in support of the latter. Meany and his followers expressed their solidarity with the separatist Camp David deal on the Middle East.

Organizing anti-Soviet campaigns, the AFL-CIO bosses endeavored to break up the coalition of labor unions which opposed the US aggression in Indochina and later supported the policy of detente. They sought to involve them in a new wave of the cold war, to enlist their support for the arms race and

<sup>1</sup> *World Magazine*, July 20, 1974, p. M-2.

international tension. Meany and his associates hoped to achieve their goals relying on the fact that the leaders of a number of American unions are connected with the extremely influential Jewish Labor Committee with a membership of about 500,000.

One of the directions in the AFL-CIO leaders' fight against detente was disrupting economic cooperation between socialist and capitalist countries. At its session on May 9, 1973, the executive council called on Congress to reject the administration's proposal for according the Soviet Union the most favored nation status in trade. The purpose of that demand was, among other things, to prevent the Export-Import Bank and private companies granting credits to the Soviet Union.

The union bureaucracy attempts to weaken the role of the United Nations as an instrument of consolidating peace. In the 1970s, the AFL-CIO leaders concentrated on bringing the activities of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in line with the interests of American imperialism. They were especially annoyed at the ILO resolutions condemning Israel's policy on the occupied Arab territories and the terror and police violence against labor unions in the countries with dictatorial regimes. As a sign of protest against the admission in 1975 of PLO observers to the ILO, the AFL-CIO boycotted, just as in 1966, its general conference. The AFL-CIO leaders were also displeased with the ILO promoting cooperation between members of the World Federation of Trade Unions and unions affiliated to other international associations.

The American representatives persisted in their attempts to disrupt the work of the ILO, and to impose on it their assessments of major international problems. The disruptive activities of the Meany group were acclaimed by those politicians in the USA who tried to prevent the relaxation of international tension and the development of Soviet-American relations. However, the ILO stood up to the pressure of the American reactionaries and, consequently, in November 1977, the US government announced the withdrawal of the USA from that United Nations agency.

The AFL-CIO leaders fought against detente. They even attempted to disrupt the work of the United Nations. In December 1975, Meany called on the US government to

withdraw from the United Nations if the latter refused to follow American dictates. The Meany group was instrumental in passing a decision in Congress to reduce US contributions to UNESCO.

The attacks against detente kept increasing. Having begun in November 1971 with attempts to sow doubts about the possible consequences of the policy of detente, union bureaucrats, in the second half of the 1970s, came out with direct appeals to resume the cold war and increase expansionism in the US foreign policy. Addressing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Meany asserted that the USA suffered defeats in various parts of the world because it did not try to impose its system on the rest of the world. He insisted that the USA must not be afraid to disturb the status quo. The task of US foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s was, according to Meany, to ensure the growth of American influence throughout the world by all possible methods, including forceful ones, and to reshape the world political map in the interests of US imperialism.

The AFL-CIO 12th Convention (December 1977) showed that its reactionary leaders were fighting both against detente and against positive processes in the international labor movement. In 1975, AFL-CIO leaders set up a Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI) to subvert the West European labor movement. As George Morris pointed out, the objective of the FTUI was "to recruit agents to bore from within Europe's unions for support of the Meany anti-detente, pro-Pentagon position".<sup>1</sup> Ernest S. Lee, AFL-CIO director of international affairs, frankly stated in April 1978 that "the rise in influence of 'commies' in Italy, France, Spain and Portugal presents a threat that is not being met by the ICFTU. Formation of the Free Trade Union Institute... is 'our way of doing something when the ICFTU is not doing enough'".<sup>2</sup>

At the 12th Congress of the ICFTU delegates condemned the policies of the governments of capitalist countries which failed to overcome the crisis that hit their economies in the 1970s and gave up the idea of taking effective measures to

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, December 15, 1977, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Business Week*, April 17, 1978, p. 128.

reduce unemployment. The congress stated the need for strengthening peace and called for further consolidation of detente, whereas the AFL-CIO representative Irving Brown tried to push the work of the congress along the channels of anti-Sovietism and anti-communism.

The defeat of the US intervention in Indochina, the overall change in the world balance of forces in favor of socialism and the influence of the consistent peace policy pursued by the governments of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries intensified political divisions within the US labor movement. Rejection of the cold war and the policy of confrontation became more pronounced. Public opinion surveys in 1969 showed that the overwhelming majority of Americans were in favor of detente and the policy of peaceful coexistence. Even in the second half of the 1970s, when reactionaries' attacks on detente intensified, the aspirations of Americans for relaxation of international tension, strengthening peace and improving the Soviet-American relations continued to be exceptionally strong. A survey conducted in May 1978, that is, at a time of deterioration of Soviet-American relations, showed that 71 per cent of Americans supported the policy of detente, and the percentage was even higher among union members (74 per cent). In the spring of 1979, more than 80 per cent of union membership supported the SALT-2 Treaty.<sup>1</sup>

In June 1972, the UAW Executive unanimously passed a resolution stating that the cold war did not accord with the workers' social and economic interests, and that they therefore welcomed the improvement of the relations between the two powers. The leaders of that union advocated detente and the development of business cooperation with the socialist countries, aware that that policy might ensure the work of American plants at full capacity and provide jobs for workers suffering from unemployment, which increased in the 1970s. In July 1972, the Executive passed a resolution calling on the US government and Congress to help US economy by enabling American firms to increase the export of machines and spare parts to the Soviet Union. It sharply criticized the Pentagon's resistance to the liberalization of the export policy and pointed out that it was workers rather than corporations

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, May 10, 1979, p. 3.

that suffered from restrictions on trade with the Soviet Union. The restrictive policy was described as economic suicide.

Some other trade unions also supported Soviet-American business cooperation. The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers not only passed resolutions demanding the lifting of discriminatory restrictions on trade between the USA and the Soviet Union. It sent delegations to Washington in an attempt to persuade the government and Congress to extend business cooperation with the Soviet Union. The bourgeois mass media had to admit that the activity of that union increased employment among American machine-builders. In Springfield, Vermont, a major machine-building center, Soviet orders reduced unemployment from 11 per cent to 3.9 per cent of the total work force.

Organized labor in the USA increasingly realize that the growing military spending leads to reduced budgeting of social welfare goals—lower unemployment, effective measures against inflation, aid to crisis-stricken cities, improvement of social security, health service and education, and easing the burden of taxation. In the late 1970s, the myth that cuts in military production entail greater unemployment began to disintegrate. In 1979, the International Association of Machinists published the findings of a study showing that \$1 billion spent by the government on military production provides 45,000 jobs, while the same amount spent on non-military purposes creates 59,000 jobs, i.e., nearly a third more.<sup>1</sup> As William Winpisinger, President of the International Association of Machinists, said, the Pentagon budget, by diverting funds from the civilian economy, "costs the machinists over 120,000 civilian jobs... We aren't going to be blackmailed with the old jobs argument this year."<sup>2</sup>

In May 1979, those supporting the policy of detente included the unions of state, county and municipal employees, workers in the applied arts, in the food industry and commerce, communications employees, workers in the electrical, radio, machine-building, oil, chemical, atomic, clothing, tex-

<sup>1</sup> *Newsweek*, January 29, 1979, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, January 27, 1979, p. 1.

tile, and service industries.<sup>1</sup> In the past, too, these unions had repeatedly demanded that the AFL-CIO leadership support the policy of detente. Thus, the convention of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department comprising some 60 unions, held in Atlanta in December 1977, demanded a sharp reduction in nuclear armaments, calling on "the President and Congress to transfer from the military budget funds saved through arms reduction agreements, reorganization of forces, and other economy measures to fund vital domestic programs meeting human needs".<sup>2</sup> That resolution was passed on to the 12th AFL-CIO Convention and, as was to be expected, it was declined by the drafting committee consisting of Meany supporters.

The AFL-CIO unions supporting the policy of detente and strengthening peace had close links with the major independent unions—the United Auto Workers, the National Education Association and the United Mine Workers of America, and also with such progressive unions as the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, and the West Coast International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. These unions supporting the policy of detente comprise more than 9 million members. Some of their leaders are members of the AFL-CIO executive council.

The stance of these unions had a positive influence on the foreign policy orientation of some other unions, whose leaders had for a long time held rather reactionary positions. From the beginning of the cold war, the East Coast Longshoremen's Association boycotted Soviet ships at the bidding of the bosses of the AFL and later of the AFL-CIO. For this reason, for 25 years Soviet ships could not enter the US East Coast ports. That hindered the development of Soviet-American trade. At the same time, however, the West Coast Longshoremen's Union always came out in support of the development of the Soviet-American relations on the basis of the principles of friendship and peace. Soviet ships have therefore put in at the West Coast ports without hindrance.

Intending to disrupt Soviet-American trade relations, the AFL-CIO leaders and the East Coast Longshoremen's pre-

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, October 1977, p. 6; February 1978, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, February 1978, p. 26.

sident Thomas Gleason went out of their way to perpetuate the boycott of Soviet ships. But the need of the American working people for the development of trade with the Soviet Union proved to be stronger than the hostile attitudes to such trade. Soon after the signing of a trade agreement between the USSR and the USA in October 1972, a union newspaper wrote that the agreement was of historic significance, as it would create thousands of new jobs in the merchant navy and related branches of the economy. The AFL-CIO leadership failed to hold down the East Coast Longshoremens to its old positions, and it gave up the boycott. On February 7, 1973, the Soviet SS *Novgorod* entered the New York port. A team of American longshoremens quickly unloaded the ship's load of 250 tons. Since then, Soviet ships called unhindered at the East Coast ports. The attempts of Meany and his followers to renew the boycott of Soviet ships in October 1973 and August 1975 failed, and these ports were only closed to Soviet ships in 1981 by President Reagan.

The improvement of Soviet-American relations and the beginning process of detente brought a growing desire among US unionists to establish links with Soviet unions. Many unions in the USA, ignoring Meany's strict ban, sent dozens of delegations to the USSR. After the Soviet-American summit talks held in Moscow in May 1972, more American union delegations visited the USSR than in the whole previous existence of the Soviet Union. After the visits in 1972 of delegations from the Associated Actors and Artists and from the Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, discriminatory anti-communist provisions were excluded from their Rules.

Under the impact of the growing dissatisfaction of many labor organizations in the USA, Congress adopted in August 1977 an amendment to the bill on the State Department's budget. The amendment was introduced by Senator George McGovern, who is connected with the left wing of the trade union movement, and essentially meant a weakening of restrictions on entry into the USA of representatives of trade unions of the USSR and other socialist countries. The authorities tried to ignore the McGovern amendment, but in the fall of 1977, under pressure from a number of American unions, the State Department permitted a visit to the USA of a Soviet trade union delegation invited by the national

coordinating committee of the Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy. In 1978, several official Soviet trade union delegations visited the USA at the invitation of their American counterparts.

American workers in various industries, members of many unions, received the delegates of Soviet workers with great interest and were eager to get an insight into the life of the Soviet people. During the numerous meetings it was stressed that union cooperation must be expanded in the interests of strengthening peace and easing international tension, in the interests of the working people of both countries.

Those were, in fact, the first visits after the tour of the USA by a delegation from the Soviet Central Council of Trade Unions in 1945. The Communist Party USA called the labor victory in the struggle against restrictions on visits "a historic breakthrough in the building of international trade union cooperation and a real contribution to the struggle for detente and peaceful relations between our two countries".<sup>1</sup>

However, in spring 1979, the Meany group pressured Congress into partially ahrogating the McGovern amendment, which enabled the American reactionaries to implement discriminatory policies against Soviet trade unions.

The support of the policy of detente by US labor unions grew. Significant in this respect were the changes in the positions of the United Steelworkers Union, the largest in the AFL-CIO. The leaders of that union had supported Meany in his policy of class collaboration and in the struggle against detente. Yet, in May 1979, the Steelworkers' leaders changed their stand, influenced by the growing sentiment among the membership in favor of detente.

Under the impact of these events, the AFL-CIO executive council on August 7, 1979 passed a resolution calling on the Senate to ratify the SALT-2 Treaty. *The New York Times* described that resolution as an obvious departure by Meany's followers from a hostile attitude toward SALT-2.

The positive changes in the Americans' social consciousness brought about by detente gave some US labor leaders a chance to express more boldly their independent views,

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, October 1977, p. 7.

without fear of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. For the same reason, the rank and file also exerted effective pressure on the union leaders, changing in the final analysis the orientation of the entire US union movement. In the 1970s, the struggle around the policy of detente consolidated the peace-loving forces in the US labor movement and sapped the positions of the opponents of detente.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE COMMUNIST PARTY USA FIGHTING FOR UNITY, PEACE AND DETENTE (THE 1960s AND 1970s)

#### Contending for Mass Influence

As has been pointed out above, the second half of the 1960s was a period of radical change for the US Communist Party. By that time it had repulsed the attacks of the reactionaries. The Party's bold actions in defense of the working people, its active part in the movement against the Vietnam war and its role in the struggle against the offensive mounted by the right-wing forces, which at the previous elections had supported Republican Senator Barry Goldwater as candidate for the presidency, drew the attention of the progressive American public to the Communist Party. The interest for the activities of the Communists was considerable. In response, the reactionaries intensified their struggle against the Party, and went out of their way to make it register as an agent of a foreign power so as to use this as a pretext to confine the Communists and members of the democratic movement to concentration camps built in many states.

In early November 1965, the Columbia District court held a new trial of the Communist Party in Washington, which was in many ways reminiscent of the 1949 Foley Square trial. The difference was that in 1949 it had been a trial of the leaders of the CP USA, while in 1965 it was a trial of the entire Party as a political organization. The legal authorities again used the evidence of a great number of paid informers of the FBI who had infiltrated not only the Communist Party but also other democratic organizations critical of the policies of the US administration. But the provocation misfired. The "witnesses" became confused in trying to use false documents on links between

the Communist Party and a foreign power. The reaction suffered an obvious setback.

It should be pointed out, however, that the activity of the Party was adversely affected by the absence of a program that would determine clearly and unequivocally its strategy and tactics under the new conditions. Some 50 years had passed since the first program was adopted. The situation had changed not only in the USA but in the whole world. It had to be thoroughly analyzed from class, Marxist positions, and the Party's tasks had to be determined.

Lenin once wrote: "Without a program a party cannot be an integral political organism capable of pursuing its line whatever turn events may take. Without a tactical line based on an appraisal of the current political situation and providing explicit answers to the 'vexed problems' of our times, we might have a circle of theoreticians, but not a functioning political entity."<sup>1</sup> American Communists were also guided by that thesis of Lenin.

The commission for working out a draft program, set up by the National Committee, finished its work by February 1966. The draft was published, and a broad discussion began. It coincided with an acute ideological struggle in the international communist movement.

On June 22-26, 1966, the 18th Convention of the Party was held in New York. Its motto was For a Radical Change. That was the first publicly held convention in 20 years. At a time of increasing strike movement of the working class, the struggle of the Black population, and further expansion of the anti-war movement, the Party regarded its task to be the establishment of links with the masses; to attain that goal, it had to develop work in the unions, among the unorganized workers, the Black population and other minorities, young people and women. It was a question of creating a united front.

Was the task of setting up a united front justified in the 1960s? The Party's answer to that question was in the affirmative. The fight against the war in Vietnam intensified. In the course of that struggle, in which trade unions, the Black population, women and youth all participated, the

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, "The Election Campaign and the Election Platform", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 280.

foundations were laid for creating a united front of all the democratic forces of the country:

The convention sharply criticized the views of the "left"- and right-wing opportunists, who rejected the possibility of implementation of such a task under the existing conditions and demanded that the proposals on the united front be stricken from the draft program.

In this connection, the convention paid special attention to organizational and ideological consolidation of the Party ranks. In particular, Gus Hall in his keynote report stressed the need for a most resolute, uncompromising struggle against any departure from Marxism-Leninism.

Of great significance was the adoption of the new Party Constitution. It stated that the Communist Party is a political organization of the working class, whose theory is founded on the principles of scientific socialism, the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The main task of the Party is the struggle for the vital interests of workers, farmers, the Black population and all the working people.

The Constitution said that exploitation of man by man, poverty, wars, racism and ignorance can only be abolished through socialist restructuring of society. The Communist Party believes that a peaceful democratic path to socialism is possible through widespread mass political and economic struggle of the people. But that would require leadership by the working class, its utmost cohesion, its links with the Black population and a close unity of all the strata of US population exploited and oppressed by big monopolies.

The convention unanimously passed a number of resolutions on developments in the world and in the country. There were so many proposals from the delegates on all issues that the convention was unable to consider them in detail and instructed the new National Committee to study them and to draft resolutions on the position of farmers and agricultural workers, on the fight against racism and anti-Semitism, and on the position of American Indians. The resolution on solidarity with the Vietnamese people emphasized that the Communist Party would intensify its campaign against the criminal US aggression in Vietnam and work to draw various strata of the American people in the anti-war movement.

The resolution on the situation in Latin America protest-



ed against the US armed intervention in the Dominican Republic and the interference of American imperialism in the affairs of other Latin American countries. Provocations against Cuba were resolutely condemned, and the convention demanded that the US military base in Guantanamo should be liquidated.

The convention carefully considered the remarks on the draft program. It became obvious that the draft needed amendments, since many of its propositions were subjected to substantive criticism. The debate was to be continued until the next convention. The convention decided to change the name of the Party's organ *Worker* to *Daily World*, and to publish it 5 times a week, not twice, so as to intensify ideological work and extend the Party's influence among the masses. Thus, after a 10-year break, the Party re-established its Marxist-Leninist daily. Gus Hall later called it "one of our greatest achievements".<sup>1</sup>

The convention elected the Party's National Committee of some 90 members of whom nearly a third were young men and women who had recently joined the Party.

In his comments on the new stage in the Party's work, Gus Hall stated at the convention: "The Party has fought its way out of political isolation. The Party has started to grow both in membership and influence. We are a factor in the Left stream of each of the mass currents in the country. The overall policies and tactical line projected by the Party have been sound."<sup>2</sup>

The 18th Convention of the Communist Party became a great landmark in the life of Henry Winston. He was elected National Chairman of the Communist Party and has held that post ever since. Gus Hall was re-elected General Secretary of the Party. The fact that a white and a Black were elected leaders of the Party was of great symbolic significance. It was evidence of the true internationalist spirit of the Communist Party USA.

<sup>1</sup> Gus Hall, *On Course: The Revolutionary Process. Report to the 19th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A.*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1969, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Gus Hall, *For a Radical Change—the Communist View. Report and Concluding Remarks to the 18th National Convention, Communist Party, U.S.A., June 22-26, 1966*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1966, p. 66.

The decisions of the convention were of great importance for the Communist Party. The Party was mobilized for vigorous activity. The anti-war movement in the country developed on an unprecedented scale. Letters and cables were sent to Congress demanding an end to the war in Vietnam and withdrawal of American troops from Indochina. The movement took various forms: protest demonstrations and rallies, picketing, campaigning in the press, direct appeals to government officials and members of the cabinet, draft dodging, etc. A wave of protest swept through the whole of the country.

The struggle of the Black population assumed unprecedented intensity. The summer of 1966 was called "the long hot summer". In that year, unrest spread to 120 cities. The police and the National Guards launched harsh repression against the participants. The Black action was especially powerful in the spring of 1968 following the assassination on April 4 of Martin Luther King, leader of the civil rights movement and head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. At the time, Dr. King was preparing a poor people's march on Washington. In one week, between April 4 and 11, there were as many disturbances as in the whole of 1967. 43 persons lost their lives in the bloody events, 3,500 were wounded and 7,500 arrested.

The Communist Party severely condemned the crime committed by the reactionaries. Gus Hall and Henry Winston made a statement for the press on behalf of the Party. Pointing out Martin Luther King's enormous role in the struggle against racial discrimination, poverty, and the militarist policies of the US ruling circles, they demanded an immediate investigation and arrest of the perpetrators of the crime. They called on all white Americans concerned about the destiny of their country to consider carefully their responsibility for the vicious racism aimed against the Black population, and urged union leaders to critically revise their stance on the racial issue and fight resolutely for the civil liberties and against Jim Crowism.

Dr. King's assassination did not stop preparations for the march on Washington. On the contrary, they were intensified. Together with other progressive organizations and labor unions, the Communist Party took a most vigorous part in these preparations. The march took place in June of

that year. The government launched harsh reprisals against the marchers. The Communist Party made a statement indicating the great importance of the march which focussed the attention of the entire nation on the plight of millions of Americans and showed up the cynicism of the administration spending billions of dollars on the arms race and the war in Vietnam.

At that time, the country was shaken by yet another crime. In early June 1968, Robert Kennedy, one of the Democratic candidates for the presidency, was assassinated in Los Angeles.

The election campaign of 1968 was thus fought in a tense political situation. The Communist Party, strong enough by that time, decided to take part in it as an independent political organization with its own presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The last time it had taken part in a presidential campaign was 1940. An extraordinary convention was called to discuss the issue of participation in the presidential election campaign and to work out an election program.

#### The 1968 Election Campaign. The Defeat of the "Left"- and Right-Wing Revisionists

The extraordinary convention of the CP USA was held on July 4-7, 1968 in New York. On the opening day, the first issue of the new paper *Daily World* appeared. It carried an interview with Henry Winston, who commented on the forthcoming elections and the importance of the Communist Party's participation in the campaign. Winston said: "We expect to support every progressive tendency which can lead in the direction of the eventual mass break-away of workers, farmers, Negroes, middle-class from the two-party system into an anti-monopoly coalition in the country."

The Communist Party, Winston pointed out, believes it necessary to give the American people a chance to learn its views on all issues. Therefore the Party decided to field its candidates both on the national and local scale, and to mount a broad campaign using the media and mass rallies. "We are convinced there are millions of Americans who are ready to listen to us today... Our hope is to bring together all the anti-war currents, both inside and outside the two-

party system, to form eventually an anti-monopoly coalition that will carry on the fight against the war and establish a real peace, now and for the future."<sup>1</sup>

On the first day of the convention the delegates heard a report by Gus Hall, who summed up the preliminary results of the debate on the Party's draft program that had gone on for about two and a half years. Although most members of the Party recognized, said Gus Hall, that the draft program reflected the real state of affairs and that it was "a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist document",<sup>2</sup> the view was current in the Party that the debate should continue, since such important issues as anti-monopoly coalition and the role of the working class in it, and the Black liberation movement, demanded further consideration.

Both the report and the speeches at the convention sharply criticized the views of right- and "left"-wing opportunist elements who rejected the need for an anti-monopoly stage in the struggle of the American working people on the path to socialist revolution. Right- and "left"-wingers asserted that in the USA, due to an extremely high concentration of capital, a political movement striving to control the monopolies must be similar in nature to the socialist movement, and that effective restrictions on the power of the monopolies in the USA were unthinkable without socialist measures. Thus, the anti-monopoly stage of the struggle, in their view, was actually the beginning of the socialist revolution. Therefore, the struggle of the American working people at present was largely democratic in nature, its slogans being Freedom, Peace, Democracy. They rejected the appeal for an anti-monopoly coalition.

Gus Hall sharply criticized those who rejected the phase of anti-monopoly struggles as a stage in the preparation of the masses for the socialist revolution. He declared that if that anti-Leninist doctrine were to be accepted as a guideline, the Party would never be able to gain influence in the masses. He spoke against the proposals for substituting the anti-imperialist concept and the struggle against the military-industrial complex for the anti-monopoly

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, July 4, 1968, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> G. Hall, *The Path to Revolution. The Communist Program*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1968, p. 8.

concept, showing that the latter included the above tasks as its components.<sup>1</sup>

Explaining the importance of the stage of the mass anti-monopoly struggle, Gus Hall emphasized that "the anti-monopoly movement must rest on the class that faces monopoly at its base. Any idea that there can be a successful struggle against monopoly capitalism without the active role of the working class is a fatal mistake... So, when we give thought to the nature of an anti-monopoly movement—above all else we have to give thought to what is the best possible way of walking with, talking with and fighting together with our working class."<sup>2</sup>

The scientific and technological revolution and the consequent changes in the structure of the working class gave rise to quite a few fashionable theories of the working class on the wane and workers in capitalist countries losing the revolutionary spirit. Petty-bourgeois intellectuals and liberals became the carriers of these anti-Marxist theories. Some of them asserted that "in an industrial society, the working class has lost its revolutionary spirit and therefore also its historic progressive role". Others endeavored to prove that "the working class has become a part of the establishment". Still others added that "the working class has become a partner and an affluent recipient of the loot of imperialism". There were also those who spoke of the "new working class", but their judgments were so vague and full of reservations that there was much room for doubts about the ability of the "new working class" to fulfill its historic mission after the "fundamental changes" it had gone through.

Refuting all these anti-working-class concepts, Gus Hall stressed that the Party program ascribed the main role to the working class in the struggle for the people's interests, rejecting all theories of some sort of "new working class" meaning in effect that the proletariat had lost its ability to carry out its historic mission. It had to be clearly understood, stated Gus Hall, that "any idea that there can be a successful struggle against monopoly capitalism without the active role of the working class is a fatal mistake".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, *Op. cit.*, pp. 30, 37-38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

The resolution adopted by the convention rejected the positions of the right and the "left" and described them as an attempt to split and practically undermine the Party. The resolution demanded an end to factional activity.

The convention expressed the view that participation of the Communist Party in the 1968 presidential election campaign was a necessity. It decided to nominate Charlene Mitchell, a Black woman and member of the Party's leadership, for president, and Mike Zagarell, leader of the New York Party organization, for vice-president.

Although the Party could only register its candidates in 2 states, Washington and Minnesota, and the federal District of Columbia, it campaigned in all the states despite the anti-communist laws in most of them.

In the meantime, the reactionaries increased their attacks on the Party. The bourgeois media were full of the most incredible fabrications about Communists, and terrorist acts continued against the Party leaders. In the first 6 months of 1968 alone, Party premises were bombed 22 times. Several times bombs were hidden in the Jefferson bookshop, where Marxist literature is sold.

Despite the efforts of the reactionaries, the Communist Party's election rallies everywhere attracted thousands of people eager for first-hand knowledge about the Party persecuted so relentlessly and yet not broken down in the many years of underground struggles and legal battering and remaining loyal to the cause of the working class.

During the election campaign, the Communist Party had to repulse enemy attacks both from without and from within—from the right wing and the ultra-left. These attacks increased in connection with the events in Czechoslovakia. The US Communist Party was one of the first among the Communist parties of the West to take a Marxist, class position toward the counter-revolutionary venture in Czechoslovakia and to express its appreciation of the action taken by 5 socialist countries which helped the constructive forces in Czechoslovakia in their struggle against the counter-revolutionary, anti-socialist elements. Both the right- and extreme left-wingers resorted to every means in slandering the Communist Party as a foreign agent and enemy of democracy. But the Party never swerved from its positions.

On August 22, Gus Hall made a statement for the press on behalf of the National Committee secretariat, which gave a profound Marxist analysis of the events. That statement appeared in many newspapers and magazines, including bourgeois ones. "The central issue in Czechoslovakia," it read, "is the defense of socialism against the threat of counter-revolution. It seems clear that what has happened, in the course of a process of vital democratic reform, is an upsurge of anti-socialist elements, supported by the forces of subversion of U.S. and West German imperialism... From the vantage point of a party existing within the world center of imperialism, it seems to us the most fatal error would be to underestimate the subversive powers of imperialism or the dangers of an anti-socialist take-over in Czechoslovakia for the entire socialist world."<sup>1</sup>

On August 29, an extraordinary plenary meeting of the National Committee was convened. There was only one item on the agenda—the events in Czechoslovakia. An acute controversy continued for 5 days, till September 2. The right opportunist and the extreme left from the Southern Californian and the New York organizations decided to take advantage of the new situation to attack the Party leadership and create a crisis in the Party. They published a letter in the bourgeois press condemning the actions of the 5 socialist countries and criticizing the secretariat for the statement of August 22. They called for a resolution justifying the actions of the Czechoslovak counter-revolutionaries and expressing no-confidence in the Party's leadership. Their main objective was the removal of Gus Hall and Henry Winston from the leadership.

When a ballot was taken, 61 National Committee members supported the secretariat's position, 7 voted against and 4 abstained. The opposition thus suffered a crushing defeat. The National Committee published a statement to the effect that the discussion at the plenary meeting had consolidated the unity of the Communist Party.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, August 22, 1968, pp. 1, 3.

During the election campaign the Party held dozens of rallies at which both the candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency and other Party leaders spoke. They denounced the hypocrisy of the two bourgeois parties and called on the citizens to vote for independent candidates and those of the Communist Party. The Party's unequivocal position on the issue of Czechoslovakia and on domestic issues, and its open criticism of the government's anti-popular policy brought the Party to the focus of public attention. It must specially be noted that the Party became closer to the unions, to the organized working class.

The Republican candidate Nixon won the presidential election.

The 1968 election showed that the right-wing forces in the country were a serious threat. George Wallace, the governor of Alabama and the extreme right-wing presidential candidate, got 13.5 per cent of the vote, or 9,906,141 votes. Wallace campaigned quite successfully in the South, getting the votes of small farmers and the middle strata of the population—owners of small shops and gas stations. They succumbed to anti-communist propaganda and rejected the candidacy of Eugene McCarthy who, in their view, represented "the red danger". As Gus Hall pointed out at the December plenary meeting, this activity by the racist extreme right was a new and dangerous sign in the election campaign. "This was much more than a Wallace campaign—it was the surfacing of an open fascist-like movement, which did not disappear with the elections. The 9 million votes that Wallace received constitute a serious danger signal. They show how it is possible to mislead sections of our people—including sections of the working class—under the umbrella of racism, jingoism and extreme demagoguery."<sup>1</sup>

On the subject of the Communist participation in the election campaign Gus Hall said: "The Communist presidential campaign was an important break with past hangups. With all its shortcomings, it was an important campaign. It exposed some of the basic weakness in fighting for the Party and its independent role. The struggle for Communist candidates must be continued, and it must be combined with

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, *On Course: The Revolutionary Process. Report to the 19th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A.*, p. 69.

legal and mass struggles against the anti-Communist election laws. We have made an important beginning in the fight for the electoral rights of our Party, and we have combined this with mass struggles on issues."<sup>1</sup>

### The Adoption of the New Party Program

In the spring and summer of 1969, a wave of protest against the continuing war in Vietnam swept the country. The student protest movement became more widespread. Students came out against military research programs and reserve officer training camps at colleges and universities. That meant, as Gus Hall pointed out, that the defeat of the progressive presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy did not interrupt the activity of the democratic movements for peace and civil rights.<sup>2</sup> The social consciousness obviously reached a new level—the realization that war and militarization of the economy follow from the aggressive nature of imperialism and that the USA was the bulwark of reaction, war and aggression. The struggle for peace was expanding, and it required unity of all democratic forces.

On April 30-May 4, 1969, the 19th Convention of the Communist Party was held. It became a landmark in the Party's consolidation and its growing influence among the masses. Unity of the democratic forces, ways to achieve it, and the role of the working class in it were in the limelight at the convention.

For the Communist Party, the growth of the political consciousness of the working class, vital for its leading role in the anti-monopoly struggle, was always a matter of great importance. The 19th Convention pointed out that the radicalization of the working class accelerated, and its political consciousness was growing, however slowly. More and more workers came to realize the danger of conciliatory attitudes of unionist leaders toward the monopolies.

An important indication of the radicalization of the working class pointed out at the convention was the rapid growth of an organized movement of rank-and-file members of the unions. Its great significance was stressed in Gus Hall's

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

report to the convention: "Rank-and-file movements democratize and revitalize the labor movement, making it a militant instrument of the workers against the monopolies and developing a leadership that rejects class-collaboration policies and fights for basic needs."<sup>1</sup>

The activity of rank-and-file unionists was a striking expression of the growth of the political consciousness of the entire working class, and that was of key significance for its struggle. The process of radicalization was the strongest among Black workers. Black workers, Gus Hall pointed out, became the most active section of both their class and of the whole people. The distinctive feature of the new stage in the movement of the Blacks was that, while continuing the struggle for the elimination of racial segregation and discrimination, they proceeded to fight for economic and political equality. There emerged a tendency toward coordinating that movement with the struggle of the working class, and anti-communism was being overcome. The Communist Party worked to bring together the various trends within the Black movement, to consolidate its unity and link it with the general anti-monopoly struggle of the working people of the USA.

Principal in the Party's attitude toward the Black movement are a class approach and efforts to overcome anarchism and nationalistic narrow-mindedness. These are necessary conditions for achieving unity in the working-class struggle. The convention condemned racism and white chauvinism, describing it as an ideological obstacle in the way of unity, which impedes the growth of the workers' political consciousness. It called for an uncompromizing fight against chauvinism and racism, emphasizing that the fight against racism and white chauvinism was a paramount issue for a Communist.<sup>2</sup> The unity of white and Black workers is a guarantee of success in the struggle. The Communist Party has fought for that unity from the first days of its existence.

As has been pointed out above, the right and "left" elements rejecting the stage of anti-monopoly struggle were thoroughly discomfited at the previous convention and any factional

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

activity was resolutely condemned. At the 19th Convention, however, the factionists again tried to attack the Party's political line in defiance of the decisions of the previous convention. They were a small, yet defiant group. Their positions were the same as before: rejection of the anti-monopoly stage of the struggle and discarding a class approach to the situation in the USA. Besides, they tried to attack the internationalist positions of the Party on international issues, in particular in connection with the events in Czechoslovakia. They wanted the convention to condemn the resolutions on the events in Czechoslovakia passed by the National Committee in August 1968.

However, the convention voted by an absolute majority to reject decisively the resolutions put forward by the opposition. In their speeches, the delegates demanded strict measures against those who were disorganizing the Party and disrupting its unity. The main political resolution clearly set forth the Party's position on the domestic and international issues. The convention approved the Party program, thus concluding the discussion that had lasted over 3 years.

The report on the organizational questions and the draft Constitution of the Party was made by Henry Winston, who pointed out that in the period following the 18th Convention the Party had grown numerically (although the growth was inadequate), and new Party clubs were set up; what was most important, the clubs were established at manufacturing plants. There were now hundreds of Party clubs throughout the country, said Winston.

Under the new conditions, the Party had to revise the existing system of leadership to facilitate closer contact with the masses. "The leadership," Winston said, "must have an intimate, daily relationship with the districts, with priorities given to the concentration districts."<sup>1</sup>

At Winston's suggestion, the convention published an open letter to the Party, which read: "We are in a period of struggles which are escalating into the proportions of a

<sup>1</sup> H. Winston, *Build the Communist Party, the Party of the Working Class. Report to the 19th National Convention, Communist Party, U.S.A., April 30-May 4, 1969*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1969, p. 11.

storm... We live in times in which class and revolutionary consciousness can mature in days and weeks where it would take months and years in so-called 'normal times'. Nowadays workers are learning quickly the need for organization and are fighting for it. Communist initiatives which stand four square on class struggle policies can help to develop left movements, can help shape and direct spontaneous movements into proper channels of struggle against oppression... The Communist Party can and must be built quickly in the workshops of our country. We live in times in which the rapid growth of the Party in industry is the most important imperative before us."<sup>1</sup>

The letter stressed the need for fighting against racism, and for unity of whites, Blacks and other minorities, which could only be achieved if the Communist Party played the decisive role among the workers of the principal industries. Only then would its revolutionary leadership be able to merge the proletariat's class struggle with the struggle for the liberation of the Black people, for the emancipation of women and the rights of the young people. The letter called on the Communists to concentrate on accelerating the "work aimed at decisively turning the Party to the working class, to extend its ties with our class by thousands of unbreakable links, to extend its leadership and influence to tens and hundreds of thousands in all sectors of the people's movements".<sup>2</sup>

Highly important were Winston's suggestions for amendments in the Party Constitution, in particular those dealing with the principle of democratic centralism. Winston called for restoring the Leninist principle of the organizational structure of the Party that had been violated in the preceding period. He suggested that a clearer definition of the essence of democratic centralism should be introduced in the Constitution instead of the old formulation adopted at the 14th Party Convention under pressure from the revisionists.

It is now recorded in the Constitution that "the system of organization of the Communist Party is based on the principle of democratic centralism, which guarantees the

<sup>1</sup> H. Winston, *Op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.



unity of theory and practice, of the membership and leadership. Democratic centralism combines the maximum involvement of the membership in determining policy and in the democratic election of leading committees, responsible direction from one national center, coordinating the activity of the entire Party along common, agreed upon lines of policy."<sup>1</sup> The Constitution contains an explanation of the essence of the principle of democratic centralism.

Henry Winston also dwelt on the need for fighting factionalism, inadmissible in the Party. He ended his speech with the words: "The road to victory in the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism is inconceivable without our becoming a mass party. We must become such a party."<sup>2</sup>

His speech was of great practical significance. The theses formulated in it later played an important role in the consolidation of the Party and increasing its vanguard role.

The new Constitution was adopted unanimously. The National Committee was renamed the Central Committee. A National Council was set up as a consultative body. The Council would consist of both Party veterans (members of the Central Committee and of provincial committees with extensive experiences) and young Party activists for whom work in the Council would be a good training in leadership. 71 persons were elected to the Central Committee and 136 to the National Council, including members of the Central Committee. Among the members of the Central Committee, 45 per cent were workers of the new industries, more than 30 per cent were under 35 years of age, and 48 per cent represented the national minorities. Gus Hall was again elected General Secretary, and Henry Winston—National Chairman.

Immediately after the convention Gus Hall, Henry Winston, James Jackson and Helen Winter went to an International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow. The meeting was held from June 5 to 17, 1969 with representatives of 75 parties attending.

The very first months after the 19th Convention showed

<sup>1</sup> H. Winston, *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

that the Party was indeed going through a period of upsurge. Its involvement in the movement against the war in Vietnam, the civil rights movement of the Blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, the struggle for economic rights of the working class consolidated its links with the masses. Anti-war actions in that period became particularly widespread. Rallies and demonstrations were held everywhere. The Communists were always in the forefront of the struggle.

The founding of a Marxist youth organization became an important event in that period. From the time of the dissolution of the Young Communist League in 1956, there had been no youth Marxist organization in the country. The W.E.B. Du Bois Clubs played a positive role in involving young people in the anti-war movement, in particular in the campaign of protest against the US aggression in Vietnam. But they were remote from Marxism. On the initiative of the Communist Party, a conference of progressive youth groups was held in February 1970 in Chicago. It brought together those who had become disillusioned with the New Left and were eager to have a better knowledge of Marxism, to find in it answers to the burning issues of the day. Representatives of some of the Du Bois Clubs were also present at the conference. That was where the Marxist Young Workers Liberation League was founded.

An important aspect of the activities of the Communist Party was the campaign for saving the life of Angela Davis, a well-known Marxist philosopher and a prominent leader of the Black liberation movement. The Angela Davis case, like those of Tom Mooney, the Scottsboro Boys, or the Rosenbergs, became a major international event, and the fact that the Communist Party was one of the initiators of the movement to save Davis greatly increased its authority in the eyes of the masses.

In January 1970, a warder was killed in a prisoners' rebellion in the Los Angeles Soledad prison. Three Blacks were accused of the murder: George Jackson, John Cluchette and Fleeta Drumgo. Soon the whole world knew the names of these "Soledad Brothers". George Jackson, the older of them, had spent 10 years in prison on a frame-up charge of stealing \$70. All three of them could end in the gas chamber. A campaign to save their lives started not only in the United States but also in many other countries.

Angela Davis, a prominent public figure, a philosophy lecturer at the University of Los Angeles and an active civil rights fighter, also joined the campaign.

Soon the Soledad Brothers were moved to the condemned cell of the San Quentin Prison in Marine County, one of the most terrible prisons in the USA. The Californian authorities began to persecute Angela Davis for her activities and her bold denunciations of the entire system, and declared her to be a red rebel. They were looking for a pretext to deal with her, and they found it. In San Rafael, Marine County, there was a trial of several Black inmates of San Quentin, the prison where the Soledad Brothers were jailed. During the trial, 4 men, including Jonathan Jackson, George Jackson's brother, intended to take hostage the judge, the district attorney and the jury so as to exchange them for the Soledad Brothers. During the gun fight, however, the judge, some members of the jury and two attackers, one of them Jonathan Jackson, were killed.

Although Angela Davis was far from the place, she was accused of being the organizer of the attack, and it was alleged that the gun found in Jonathan Jackson's possession belonged to her. Davis was included in the list of the nation's ten most wanted criminals, and a manhunt began. She was arrested on October 13, 1970.

The Communist Party started a vigorous campaign to save Angela Davis's life. A committee to free Davis was organized, headed by Communists.

In her *Autobiography* Angela Davis wrote that she believed she would be freed because Communists fought for her life. She was not a member of the Communist Party, but the struggle in which she was involved and her contacts with Communists brought her closer to the Party. While in prison, she began to read the works of Lenin which her friends brought her, and realized ever more clearly that her destiny was linked with the Communist Party. When during the trial she was asked whether she was a Communist, she proudly answered that she was a member of the Communist Party.

Henry Winston visited Angela Davis in prison. In *The Meaning of San Rafael* he wrote: "Today, the need to build a mass movement to free Angela Davis ... and all political prisoners is a vital starting point for speeding the forma-

tion of a great, popular movement to turn back the forces aiming to push the country into fascism."<sup>1</sup>

The legal authorities were out to destroy Angela Davis in one way or another. She was soon extradited to California where Governor Reagan, future US President, had introduced capital punishment by electrocution. Angela was in mortal danger. The Communist Party called upon the public to step up the Free Angela campaign.

In February 1972, Angela Davis was unanimously elected a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party USA at the 20th Party Convention. That happened a few days before her release. World public opinion had forced the US authorities to retreat. Angela was acquitted and, on February 23, set free. The struggle for her freedom helped consolidation of progressive forces in the country.

### The Communist Party During the Period of Detente

The Party's active participation in the anti-war movement, its support of the struggle of the working class and the Black movement and the campaign in defense of Angela Davis enhanced the prestige of the Party and its leaders. By the early 1970s, the Party had achieved certain successes in establishing links with the masses.

The Party braced itself to fight new battles in the coming year 1972, the year of presidential election. The Party, relying on its experience of 1968, decided to take part again in the election campaign as an independent political force.

In November 1971, an enlarged extraordinary plenary meeting of the Central Committee was held to discuss participation in the 1972 election. The meeting pointed out the danger of the increasingly active forces of the right, which had failed to gain victory for their candidates in 1964 and 1968. The task of the Party was to build a coalition of the working class, the Black population and all the democratic, anti-monopoly forces. As Winston

<sup>1</sup> H. Winston, *The Meaning of San Rafael*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 4.

emphasized, the Party's entire work among the masses must be subordinated to the new election campaign. "The key word is 'struggle'—struggle on every front... The election campaign is the alpha and omega of the work of the Party in 1972."<sup>1</sup>

This time the Communist Party nominated Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Communist Party USA, as its presidential candidate, and Jarvis Tyner, National Chairman of the Young Workers Liberation League, as vice-president.

The 20th Convention was called in February 1972 to finally endorse the candidates and adopt the Party's election platform.

The convention was held from February 18 to 21, 1972, with delegates coming from 36 states and the federal District of Columbia. 34 per cent of the delegates were men and women under 30. There were steel-workers, auto workers, longshoremen, construction workers and workers of many other industries among the delegates, an indication of the changes that had taken place in the Party after the 19th Convention. The Party absorbed many young men and women, the number of industrial workers was growing, and so was the number of union members. All of this was also reflected in the work of the convention, marked by a militant spirit, unity, and absence of any groupings or factions.

Summing up the Party's activities in the period after the previous convention, Gus Hall declared that the Party's strength had grown despite the attacks of the reactionaries. Its links with the masses had become more solid, and participation in the union movement had expanded. The interest of the progressive public, and in particular of students, in the ideas of scientific communism and the program of the Communist Party had grown. At the same time, as Gus Hall emphasized, the situation demanded more vigorous efforts to consolidate the Party and raise the level of its entire activity. The most important task remained that of increasing the

<sup>1</sup> H. Winston, *The Politics of People's Action. The Communist Party in the '72 Election*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1972, pp. 13, 14.

membership, in the first place recruiting the new members from the ranks of the working class.<sup>1</sup>

The convention again focussed on ideological problems. These were dealt with in a report by Henry Winston, who pointed to the danger of the divisive petty-bourgeois and Social-Democratic ideology that rejects the vanguard role of the working class in the social revolution, preaches so-called class peace and thus serves the interests of monopoly capital, consolidating its dominion.

Winston stressed in particular the need for a most vigorous struggle against any manifestations of racist ideology disrupting the unity of the working class in its struggle for economic and political rights. Only the Communist Party, guided by the Marxist-Leninist theory of class struggle, is capable of uniting the efforts of all the sections of the working people in the struggle against exploiters, and it will do so, stated Henry Winston in conclusion.

The convention adopted a political resolution which offered an analysis of the international situation and the political situation in the USA; in particular, it brought out the anti-monopoly character of the mass movements. A considerable part of the resolution dealt with organizational issues in the Party.

After a discussion of Communist participation in the coming election, the convention confirmed the Central Committee's decision to nominate Gus Hall candidate for the presidency and Jarvis Tyner for the vice-presidency.

The 20th Convention again elected Gus Hall General Secretary of the Party, and Henry Winston—National Chairman.

February 21, the day the convention finished its work, was declared to be the first day of the Party's election campaign.

One of the principal points of the Communist Party's election platform on foreign policy was improvement of Soviet-American relations. The Communist Party had formulated that demand long before the news of the summit

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, *Capitalism on the Skids to Oblivion. The People's Struggle for a New Beginning. Report to the 20th National Convention, Communist Party U.S.A., February 18-21, 1972*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1972, pp. 82-84.

meeting between the leaders of the two countries. When reports of the coming meeting in Moscow appeared in the media, the Party welcomed the event as a historic step putting an end to the cold war.

Proponents of the cold war, the groups linked with the military-industrial complex, immediately attacked President Nixon's visit to Moscow, trying to talk him out of that trip. Reactionary circles in the USA bent over backwards trying to prevent the Soviet-American summit meeting and to create a negative attitude among the public to the normalization of relations between the two countries.

But the historic meeting did take place. The event occurred in Moscow, in May 1972. As is well known, important documents were signed during the meeting, which had a great significance not only for the Soviet and American peoples but also for the peoples of the whole world.

The US Communist Party evaluated highly the results of the summit talks. The statement published by the Party said: "The Moscow summit meeting was a victory for the peoples of the world. It affirmed the principle of peaceful coexistence of different social systems, an affirmation which was itself a step toward making coexistence a reality... The summit meeting and the agreements reached there clearly mark the failure of a policy pursued by the imperialist powers for more than a quarter of a century—the policy of cold war and confrontation—which was initiated after World War II by the Western powers to 'contain communism'."<sup>1</sup>

A new stage in Soviet-American relations began, the stage of transition from confrontation to mutually advantageous cooperation between the two countries. The normalization of the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States was greeted with great satisfaction not only by the Soviet and American peoples but by the peoples of the whole world, as it promoted relaxation of international tension.

During the election campaign, the Communist Party

<sup>1</sup> *World Magazine*, June 10, 1972, p. M-2.

explained to the masses the importance of improvements in Soviet-American relations. That was all the more necessary as opponents of detente, after a period of confusion, went on the offensive.

During the campaign, millions of Americans heard televised speeches of the Communist Party's General Secretary. Hundreds of thousands came to rallies addressed by Communist candidates and members of the Party leadership. Party literature, posters, leaflets and badges were handed out in millions. Never before in the post-WW II period had the masses listened to the voice of the Communist Party so eagerly. That was a true end of the Party's isolation, with the simple people of America coming to know its program.

In their attempts to sap the Party's activity and put an end to its participation in the election campaign, the reactionary circles staged all kinds of provocations. FBI agents infiltrated Party organizations to sow dissent and discord. The enemy did not stop short at most extreme moves, including acts of terror against the Party's leaders. In the summer of 1972, an attempt was made in St. Louis on the life of Gus Hall. The organizers intended to kill him at a meeting in one of the major bookshops where he planned to make an election speech. The crime was averted only through the Party's vigilance.

The Communist election campaign was quite a success, with considerable results gained in canvassing support for the demand to include the Party's candidates on the ballot ticket in various states. Even in such states as Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas, North Carolina, Virginia and Florida, where local anti-Communist laws banning the Communist Party from participation in the elections were still in force, many signed the Communist ballot petition. As a result, the Party gathered 400,000 signatures in 25 states, which far exceeded the legal stipulations of these states. However, despite the successful campaign to collect signatures, the Party was permitted to take part in the elections only in 13 states and the District of Columbia (in 1968, only in 2 states).

On the whole, the participation of the Communist Party in the election campaign was an immense event for it. Speaking soon after the elections at a meeting of the

Central Committee held on December 8-10, Gus Hall said that the 1972 election campaign constituted a historic advance. The campaign, he noted, broke down the barriers in the mass media, legal bars, the semi-underground status of the Party, and negative and pessimistic thoughts in the minds of many Communists. There was a new sense of self-confidence and pride throughout the Party, he declared, adding that tens of millions had been influenced by the campaign and were ready to listen to what the Party had to say.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the new situation in which the Party found itself, and the situation within the Party, the December 1972 meeting of the Central Committee decided to reintroduce party cards abolished in 1948, at the height of McCarthyism, when the House Un-American Activities Committee operated full swing and membership in the Communist Party entailed harsh reprisals. The first Party cards were issued in January 1973.

The reintroduction of Party cards was enthusiastically welcomed by the Party membership. The fact was also commented on in the media. Even such a reactionary journal as *U.S. News and World Report* carried an article entitled "U.S. Communists: Coming Alive Again?", saying: "The U.S. Communist Party—operating virtually underground for a quarter century—is again out in the open and claiming new strength. Membership cards are being issued for the first time since 1948... Communists are 'showing the face of the party'."<sup>2</sup>

Normalization of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, the two superpowers, continued to develop. In June 1973, Leonid Brezhnev visited the United States, where the second Soviet-American summit meeting was held. Shortly before it, on June 2, 1973, Gus Hall said at a Central Committee meeting that the visit would demonstrate again that "peaceful coexistence between capitalist and socialist nations is a force against the policies of imperialist aggression. It is the policies of imperialist aggression that are forced to give way because of the

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, December 12, 1972, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. News and World Report*, September 17, 1973, p. 66.

pressures of the socialist world and the policies of peaceful coexistence... The breakup of the cold war iceberg is a fact and a defeat of imperialism."<sup>1</sup>

During Leonid Brezhnev's visit, the *Daily World* published numerous materials on the summit meeting and offered a deep analysis of the documents signed, stressing their paramount importance both for the Soviet and American peoples and for the rest of the world. In a letter to Leonid Brezhnev, Henry Winston and Gus Hall wrote: "There is a deep awareness by large sections of our people that your visit to the United States is a reflection of a historic shift in world affairs... Your visit brings into sharper focus the comparisons between the two social systems—capitalism in a crisis, unstable, with unemployment, racism and oppression, and the Soviet Union, a socialist land, a multinational country that has eliminated unemployment, racism and oppression, and is committed to the loftiest humanist goals."<sup>2</sup>

During his visit to the USA, Leonid Brezhnev met with Gus Hall and Henry Winston and expressed his best wishes to the US Communist Party for new achievements in the common cause of friendship between the peoples of the USSR and the USA, for the relaxation of international tension and social progress.

Detente and improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States considerably undermined anti-Sovietism and anti-communism in the country, so that the Communist Party ceased to be a bogeyman for many Americans. Explaining the reasons for open manifestations of interest in the Communist Party, the bourgeois press wrote that the detente convinced most Americans that there was no Communist plot in existence.

The political situation within the country was at that time sharply aggravated by the Watergate scandal—the disclosure of the attempts by leaders of the Republican Party's election campaign to bug the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate Hotel. The public demanded the President's impeach-

<sup>1</sup> *World Magazine*, June 30, 1973, p. M-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily World*, June 19, 1973, p. 3.

ment. "Impeachment now" was the demand of all the unions without exception, and it was combined with other demands, including economic ones.

The Communist Party joined the movement for impeachment, describing the situation in the country as the most contradictory one in the postwar period. The *Daily World* wrote that there was a broad front formed by the forces demanding impeachment, from the Communist Party to the labor unions. Such a broad front did not exist in 1947, during the fight against the Taft-Hartley Act.

However, pointing out the mass character of the movement for impeachment, the *Daily World* emphasized at the same time that it was necessary to see the differences in the goals of its participants. Meany and his collaborators, wrote the *Daily World*, not only supported corruption and the administration's socio-economic policies detrimental to the working class but also opposed, above all, the improvement of the relations between the USSR and the USA, the agreements signed between them and, consequently, the relaxation of international tension as a whole.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party regarded Watergate as a natural manifestation of the acute crisis of the whole power structure of state-monopoly capitalism rather than as an isolated episode in the political life of the USA or Nixon's personal affair.

The Communist Party regarded the Watergate affair in a more thoroughgoing manner than other political forces in the country which regarded a change of the president as a cure-all. The Communist Party pointed to the corruption eating away at the entire government apparatus, not only the executive arm but Congress as well. "The people have an urgent responsibility to dig deeper into the corruption and the police-state conspiracy, the cancerous growth of monopoly, military and Presidential power which is destroying the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the vitality and democratic aspirations of the people."<sup>1</sup>

However, along with the masses, Nixon's impeachment was demanded by those who would have willingly forgiven him both Watergate and the constitutional violations, had he only given up the policy of normalizing Soviet-American

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, August 18, 1973, p. 3.

relations and stopped the process of detente. For this reason, the Communist Party, supporting the demand of calling Nixon to account, at the same time exposed the enemies of detente.

The Communist Party pointed out that it was clear from the outset that there would be sections of monopoly capital and the reactionary union leadership to whom detente would be unwelcome. "For some time the forces opposing detente in the U.S. were in disarray," Gus Hall wrote. "They were not able to unite their ranks... They felt themselves isolated. But now they are beginning to swarm. The campaign against detente is gaining some momentum. If not challenged by the people it can switch U.S. foreign policy back to the cold war rails."<sup>1</sup>

### The Labor and Democratic Movements and the Communist Party

The end of the cold war and detente did not at all mean the end of class struggle. On the contrary, it is detente that makes class confrontation more acute and it was conducive to an upsurge in the mass struggle in the USA. Indeed, the beginning of the 1970s in the USA was marked by an increase in the strike movement. The number of strikes rose from year to year. In the preceding chapters the strike movement and its causes were analyzed. Here we need only point out that the causes of this spreading of the strike movement included a deepening economic crisis, an unprecedented growth of unemployment, inflation and the continuing deterioration of the living standards.

The class struggle pushes the Communist Party to the forefront of the labor movement. But it can only become its vanguard if it is always closely linked with the broadest sections of the population. Lenin wrote that a communist party must be able "to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in a certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, "Detente and Its Enemies," *Political Affairs*, March 1974, p. 9.



the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people*".<sup>1</sup>

The US Communist Party is fully aware of the significance of this proposition. The strike movement of the working class for democratic rights brings closer together various sections of the democratic movements: the Black population, women, young people, rank-and-file union membership. Dozens of various coalitions emerge consisting of groups and organizations whose goal is joint struggle against the encroachment of the monopolies on the people's vital interests, against racial discrimination and political persecution.

The need for a united organization that would coordinate the mass movement in defense of the civil rights was obvious. In May 1973, such an organization was set up at a conference in New York of representatives of many universities, schools and labor unions. It was called the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. Angela Davis, member of the Communist Party Central Committee, became one of its leaders, and Charlene Mitchell, member of the Communist Party Political Committee, its executive secretary. The founding of the Alliance was an important event in the country's political life. It became a leading organization conducting mass campaigns in defense of the democratic rights of both the white and the Black population. Communist Party leaders took an active part in these campaigns.

Somewhat later, on July 27, 1973, the National Coalition for Economic Justice was founded at a conference of representatives of labor unions and democratic organizations in Chicago. It united the leaders of more than 30 international, national and local unions, organizations fighting for the civil rights and well-being of the people, of religious and other groups. Implementing the decision of the conference, the Coalition staged mass demonstrations on September 8 and 12 in several cities against the policies detrimental to the people's living standards. In all the cities where the demonstrations were held, the Communist Party was among the organizers.

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1982, pp. 24-25.

The Communist Party's active participation in the setting up and the work of mass organizations, in the conferences and other actions they sponsored, enhanced the Party's standing. This was especially evident among union members. New Party clubs sprang up in industrial centers, and newspapers were published by Communist chapters at plants.

It is not accidental that as the labor movement became more and more politicized (as indicated by the active campaigning for impeachment), it was gradually becoming free of anti-communism. This was pointed out by Gus Hall at the Central Committee meeting held on June 29-July 1, 1974. "One of the most encouraging developments are the reports that anti-Communism among workers is declining. We are getting such reports from all parts of the country. In a sense this is a new development. We must study this very carefully. This opens up new possibilities in the promotion of class consciousness and, of course, the discussion of socialism. We should study it from the viewpoint of Party building."<sup>1</sup>

The Communist Party always stressed the need for a union movement following the path of class struggle, a movement that would defend the interests of the working class. That is a difficult but exceptionally important task. The difficulty lies in that the building of a union movement accepting the policies of class struggle is linked with such basic problems as the development of class consciousness, independent political action by the working class and the strengthening of the left wing in the unions. Such a movement is linked with decisive actions by organized rank-and-file workers.

The Party organized its practical work in the labor movement in such a way as to advance the development of class consciousness. One example of this was mass actions in major cities on November 16, 1974 and April 26, 1975. These actions were organized by the National Coalition to Fight Inflation and Unemployment set up in 1973 with the participation of the Communist Party. The masses showed unity and organization that had not been seen in

<sup>1</sup> *World Magazine*, July 20, 1974, p. M-9.

America for a long time. The Communist Party was directly involved in the preparation of these actions.

In a situation when the democratic and workers' movement was on an increase the 21st Convention of the Party was called. It was held on June 26-29, 1975 in Chicago, with 357 voting delegates and 36 without a vote, in all representing 38 states, in other words, some 40 per cent more than at the previous convention. Besides, there were 4 representatives of fraternal parties and 257 guests from other public organizations and labor unions. Thus, in all, the convention brought together 654 persons; 40 per cent of the delegates were women. More than half the delegates were under 40, and more than 250 were Party members from 1 to 10 years standing; 28 per cent were Blacks, and 10 per cent—members of other oppressed minorities.<sup>1</sup>

The social composition of the convention was extremely indicative. Some 20 per cent were workers of the basic industries: steelworkers, auto workers, coal-miners, radioelectronics and railway workers and longshoremen. *Political Affairs* pointed out: "A most notable feature of the Convention was its ideological unity, marking an end to the factionalism and disruption which for a number of years disrupted the work of the Party and dissipated the energies of its conventions."<sup>2</sup> 62 communist and workers' parties sent their greetings to the convention, among them the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Communist Party of Chile, the Portuguese Communist Party, the Workers' Party of Vietnam, the French Communist Party and the Italian Communist Party.

In the Central Committee's report to the convention, characterizing the situation in the country, Gus Hall especially dwell on the ongoing mass struggle of the working people, and in the first place on the strike movement of the working class. He stressed the vast significance the relaxation of international tension had for the American people fighting for their rights. The struggle for detente is the struggle for averting nuclear catastrophe, for curbing, stopping or at least slowing down the endless arms race that falls as a heavy burden on the shoulders of the working

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, September 1975, pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, August 1975, p. 1.

people. The growth of the mass movement and the strike struggle, the intensifying desire for peace and support for detente foster the anti-monopoly attitudes among the masses. But this in its turn prods the reactionary forces nostalgic for McCarthyism to regroup and go on the offensive. Gus Hall warned that under the existing conditions American imperialism would not stop at anything and might choose to promote fascism in the country.

The convention again discussed the issue of the stages in the working-class struggle, in particular the stage of anti-monopoly struggle, since some elements of the radical left still rejected the possibility of building a broad anti-monopoly unity. "The anti-monopoly concept is not an invention," Gus Hall said. "It is the only realistic, winning response to the reality of monopoly domination. It is not a diversion. It is the only realistic path along which masses will move in the struggle for the elimination of capitalism. Even more, it is the path they are now moving along."<sup>1</sup> The convention stressed the primary role of the working class, and in the first place of its organized sections, in building an anti-monopoly coalition.

The convention evaluated highly the progress of the rank-and-file movement, emphasizing that it was becoming a most important factor in the struggle against class collaboration, for transforming labor unions into a true instrument of class struggle. It was through this movement that the Party strengthened its positions in the working class, which in its turn facilitated the growth of its political consciousness. As well as many rank-and-file unionists, some prominent leaders of major trade unions, including those in the AFL-CIO, opposed the policies of class collaboration implemented by the federation leadership. The convention of the CP USA could therefore raise the question of unity of the forces of the left and center, in other words, building a left-center alliance that would play the main role in the future anti-monopoly coalition.

The 21st Convention stressed the importance of the most resolute struggle against racism and great-power chauvinism

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, *The Crisis of U.S. Capitalism and the Fight-Back. Report to the 21st Convention of the Communist Party U.S.A.*, International Publishers, New York, 1975, p. 70.

and passed a resolution on the struggle against racist and political repression. Regarding the question of an anti-monopoly coalition as one of paramount importance at the moment, the convention pointed to the need for forming, as a first step toward creating it, left alliances on the basis of which a new, third mass party, a popular party, might be built. The sooner the unity of the masses was achieved, the sooner a third party might be founded, and this would bring closer the formation of an anti-monopoly coalition.<sup>1</sup>

The convention considered a number of issues having to do with the Party's practical activities. It decided to revise and improve the Party Program adopted at the 19th Convention in 1969. Important changes had taken place since that moment. The process of detente continued to develop despite certain difficulties. In the United States, an economic crisis was growing more acute. All of this had to be reflected in the Party Program. It had to define clearly the ultimate goal of the Communist Party—the construction of socialist society in the USA.

The convention passed a number of resolutions: on the struggle for peace and detente, on work among women and the movement for women's equality, on the struggle for full Black equality and against racist and political repression, and on participation in election campaigns. The convention put forward the demand for nationalization of energy, public utilities, etc.

The convention showed special concern for the growth of the Party membership, primarily from among the working class. A resolution was adopted on stepping up Party work among industrial workers and on the growth of the Party membership.

A 71-strong Central Committee was elected, and a National Council of 136, including Central Committee members. More than 45 per cent of the Central Committee membership were workers or former workers in the basic industries, over 30 per cent were under 35, and 47 per cent were aged between 35 and 64.

The convention ended in a mass rally held on June 29 in the huge International Amphitheater seating 6 thousand.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

There were more than 2 thousand guests from other cities, including non-Party members, numerous unionists and young people. Among the speakers at the rally were not only the Party's leaders, such as Gus Hall, Henry Winston and Angela Davis, but also leaders of public organizations and unions, many of them not Party members.

At the closing of the convention, Gus Hall said that it showed the highest level of unity that had ever existed in the history of the Communist Party. This unity, he declared, was also combined with a new level of enthusiasm and confidence. He said that this new confidence and enthusiasm had developed because the Communist Party was "moving with the forces of history".<sup>1</sup>

#### From the 21st to the 22nd Convention

From one convention to the next, the Communist Party's strength and prestige grew. Its leaders were welcome speakers at universities and in the unions. Especially numerous invitations were extended to Gus Hall and Henry Winston. The public wanted to know the Communist position on all issues of both international and domestic politics. One of the reasons for the growing interest was the fact that after the repeal of the last anti-Communist laws in 1974 the Communist Party became a fully legalized organization. It declared its readiness to participate in the 1976 elections. It now had greater possibilities to do so.

The 1976 election campaign began unusually early. In fact, both bourgeois parties, the Republican and the Democratic, began the fight already in the middle of 1975.

The plenary meeting of the CP Central Committee in early 1976 again decided to nominate Gus Hall and Jarvis Tyner, now chairman of the New York Communist Party organization, as candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency.

The Party decided to fight for its candidates to be included in the ballot ticket in all 50 states. However, the conditions were now even harder than in 1972: the required number of signatures on petitions was raised considerably in several states.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, July 25, 1975, p. 2.

The election platform of the Communist Party envisaged introduction of a 6-hour workday, or a 30-hour work week, with no cuts in wages; immediate measures to reduce unemployment; and drastic cuts in military spending and an increase in social benefit funds, including funds to overcome the urban crisis. The platform called for racism to be declared a crime and demanded complete elimination of discrimination in wages on the grounds of race, ethnic affinity or sex. It also called for democratization of the tax system, and the nationalization of the energy industry and putting it under democratic control. The Communist Party issued a call for supporting the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples. As Gus Hall and Jarvis Tyner put it, the Communist Party was "a minority party with a majority program".<sup>1</sup>

Its participation in the 1976 elections confirmed that the Communist Party was becoming a recognized political force. Significantly, the petitions for the registration of the Party's candidates were signed by 500,000 (in 1972, 400,000). The Party won the right to take part in the elections in 19 states and the District of Columbia as against 13 in 1972 and 2 plus the federal district in 1968. If it had not been for the undemocratic laws in some states, banning electioneering by small parties and independents, and the policy of the local authorities to keep the Communist Party out of the campaign, it could have registered its candidates, as Gus Hall estimated, in at least 30 states, as more signatures were collected there than was required by the state laws.

The elections showed that the Communist Party played a vanguard role in the struggle for the people's vital interests, democratic rights, social progress, for peace and socialism. The Party took an active part in the intensified strike struggle in 1976-1979. It played an important role in the longest strike in the rubber industry and in strikes by mine, textile, steel and auto workers. It organized moral and financial support for the strikers.

The situation that took shape under the Carter administration compelled the Party to search for new ways of building a united front of anti-monopoly forces. Working out practical

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, December 1976, p. 2.

steps aimed at consolidating the unity of all anti-monopoly forces, the Communist Party continued to pay attention to the centrist forces in the working class which constitute the majority in it. Winning them over to the militant left-wing's side and thus building a single bloc which could not only confront the right-wing reactionary forces connected with the monopolies but deliver a blow that would neutralize them—that was the task set by the Communist Party. The centrists, as the Communist Party pointed out, constituted the largest section of the unions. The deepening crisis of capitalism which led to increased exploitation and expansion of the struggle of the working class, the breakdown of the policy of conciliation, changes in the world situation under the impact of detente, and the successes of the left forces in the union movement—all had an effect on the centrists. They became more and more convinced that the opportunist policies of the right wing weakened the unity of the working class and divided its forces.

But the Communist Party's policy toward the centrists is flexible. The Party is aware that they cannot be expected to fully recognize the platform of the left and to cooperate with them in all the areas. Radicalization is a slow process. The departure of important political forces in the unions from the right-wing positions, as Gus Hall pointed out, is the most widespread and significant process of the time. Therefore, the Party concluded, a historical necessity had evolved in the USA for the formation of a strong coalition of labor unions adhering to left and centrist positions, which would become the basis and the core of a broad anti-monopoly coalition. Consequently, "the Left-Center concept is a guide for building united front formations and relationships within the working-class and trade union movement".<sup>1</sup>

The left-center concept could only be put forward by the US Communist Party at the present stage in the development of the American labor movement, when shifts are taking place in the union movement indicative of a drift toward the left in the working class. The Communist Party USA believes that the left-center unity in the unions may be ensured through

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, "Why a Left-Center Coalition?", *Political Affairs*, January 1978, p. 1.

fighting against the monopolies' onslaught on the interests of the working class and against racism, through the drive to organize the unorganized and to reduce the work week without loss of pay, and through the fight for the relaxation of tension in the US relations with the socialist countries and reduction of military spending, for consolidating world peace and expanding cooperation between the trade unions of different countries. A coalition of left and center forces, as the Communist Party emphasized, is impossible without the participation of Communists in it. In this connection it is necessary to strike out discriminatory anti-Communist provisions, adopted during the cold war, from the constitutions of the AFL-CIO and individual unions.

All these issues were considered at the 22nd Convention of the Communist Party held on August 22-26, 1979 in Detroit. The convention coincided in time with the 60th anniversary of the Party. It was the most representative convention in the Party's history, 400 delegates from all the states took part in it, mostly industrial workers, and also farmers. Delegates from various movements in the unions attended the convention. More than 140 delegates were Blacks and representatives of other minorities. Nearly a third of those present were under 30. For the first time, the convention was attended by delegations from 31 fraternal communist parties, among them the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and national liberation movements.

In the documents adopted by the convention, the main political resolution and the draft of the new Party Program, the idea of anti-monopoly coalition was further elaborated, concrete steps toward its realization were laid down. "Life is injecting the anti-state-monopoly sentiment," the resolution said, "into every protest, every angry expression, every movement and struggle. There is present within every movement and struggle the potential for such a concept. Our task is to bring it out."<sup>1</sup>

The framework of the anti-monopoly coalition is thus expanding. It becomes an anti-state-monopoly coalition. The

<sup>1</sup> "The Struggle Ahead: Time for a Radical Change!" Main Political Resolution, 22nd National Convention, Communist Party U.S.A., August 23-26, 1979, New Outlook Publishers and Distributors, New York, 1979, p. 30.

coalition must be headed by the working class, which is accorded the central place in the convention's resolutions.

In the late 1970s, the international situation sharply deteriorated. The Carter administration adopted the policy of increasing tension, further militarization and the arms race. The American administration's moves endangered detente. In the January 1980 State of the Union message sent to Congress, President Carter formulated his foreign policy doctrine which meant, essentially, that the United States would defend its "vital interests" by military strength. The vital interests were said to be everywhere—in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe. In August of the same year, Carter announced the so-called "new nuclear strategy", which provided for a US preemptive strike at the Soviet Union, in the first place at its military installations.

The US Communist Party mobilized all forces to frustrate the hegemonist plans of American imperialism, to avert the implementation of the notorious "new nuclear strategy".

The Communist Party entered the 1980s as a united and organized political force. The 22nd Convention showed that the Party's standing among the progressive quarters of the country, the working class and the young people had grown considerably.

The level of the Party's activity in the elections rose from year to year. During the 1980 campaign, the Communist Party nominated Gus Hall and Angela Davis its candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency. In the meantime, the situation in the country became more complex. In early 1980, the Carter administration rejected normalization of the Soviet-American relations and detente. The threat of war became more imminent. The Party faced a difficult struggle for preserving peace and for changing the domestic policies of the US administration.

Gus Hall presented the Communist election platform in an election speech in Princeton on September 27, 1980. Its main propositions had been endorsed by the 22nd Convention and included in its main political resolution. Gus Hall stressed that "the key issue, the key link that all others depend upon for their solution, and the issue that may determine whether we have any quality of

life at all is the question of war or peace".<sup>1</sup> He suggested a national debate on the issue of war and peace.

Gus Hall pointed out the danger of the arms race policy pursued by the American administration under the pretext of defense against the alleged Soviet military threat, and attacked the Carter administration's plans and those of the Republican candidate Ronald Reagan both aimed to achieve military superiority and envisaging the first nuclear strike. He emphasized that there was no rational alternative to detente and peaceful coexistence. The Communist Party, Gus Hall stated, would demand changes in foreign policy, a restructuring of the economy, implementation of a full employment program and complete elimination of racism.

During the election campaign, the Party collected more than 500,000 signatures for its petitions to include the Communist candidates on the ballot ticket. It won the right to participate in the elections in 25 states. Summing up the results of the election campaign at the December 1980 plenary meeting of the Central Committee, Gus Hall said: "In many ways our Party's 1980 election campaign was excellent. It was far better than any in the past. This, however, is not equally true for all states. We reached a much larger audience. During the petitioning we talked to over 5 million people while collecting signatures. We also packaged our ideas better, in clearer, more understandable and popular ways. In spite of serious financial drawbacks and mass media roadblocks, we were able to speak to tens of millions through TV, radio and the press."<sup>2</sup> The election campaign marked the beginning of a new drive to enroll new members in the Party, which got under way in the spring and summer of 1981.

At the invitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the CP USA December meeting decided to send a delegation to the 26th Congress of the CPSU. The delegation included Gus Hall, Henry Winston, James Jackson and Samuel Webb.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, September 27, 1980, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Gus Hall, 1981—*Mandate for Fight Back*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1981, p. 11.

In January 1981, Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President, and the government's domestic and foreign policy became more reactionary than under Carter. In its foreign policy the Reagan administration resorted to strong-arm methods of hard pressure ruling out or at any rate hindering the possibility of achieving mutually acceptable decisions, trying to resolve all world issues exclusively on their own terms—and that applies both to their opponents and their partners in the international arena.

The Reagan administration endeavors to make military power its most effective, in fact, its principal tool for attaining its expansionist goals in foreign policy.

The US Communist Party boldly exposes the militarist foreign policy of the administration and the unbridled arms race aimed at production of new types of nuclear and chemical weapons and attainment of military superiority and the dominant position in the world. The Party thereby greatly helps spread an understanding among the American public that this type of policy pursued by the US administration poses a threat to the whole world, including the American people. The struggle against the dangerous policy of the US ruling circles reached unprecedented proportions in the summer of 1982. The country had not known that kind of upsurge in the anti-war movement since the aggression in Vietnam. It attracted participants from all sections of the population. Millions took part in rallies, demonstrations, referendums, nuclear freeze petitioning and peace marches. The Communist Party, in the forefront of the anti-war movement, made a great contribution to these actions.

The extraordinary conference the Party held in April 1982 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, became an important event in the Party's life. It discussed, among other things, the anti-war movement in the country. It was an open conference, attended by representatives of various sections of the population from many states. That was the second extraordinary conference in the history of the Communist Party. The first one had been held nearly 50 years previously, in 1933, when the Great Depression had led to an extremely grave situation in the country, with the working people facing great hardships.

In his speech at the conference, General Secretary Gus Hall said that it had been called because the world was



threatened with nuclear catastrophe, which posed the most serious danger for peace since World War II. The conference called on the Party and the entire American public to step up their fight for ending the arms race and for talks with the Soviet Union on limiting nuclear weapons.

The Communist Party plays an important role in American political life. Militancy, a principled attitude, loyalty to the cause of the working class and all working people, a truly Marxist approach to events in the USA and in the whole world are its most characteristic features.

## CHAPTER IX A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

### Some Aspects of the Labor Movement in the USA as Discussed by Bourgeois Authors

It has been pointed out already that characteristic of the bourgeois historians of the labor movement in the USA is rejection of classes and class struggle, an idealistic approach to the evaluation of social phenomena, an apologist attitude to capitalism, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, the dominance of chauvinistic and racist theories, and considerable influence of religion and pragmatist philosophy. These features remain determining as to the main goals and the content of most works by bourgeois ideologists on labor themes.

The authors of the present survey do not, of course, set themselves the task of covering the entire spectrum of problems or of books published on the subject in the period under consideration, merely singling out those works which bring into relief the methodological features of the works of historians, economists and sociologists.

The critique offered by bourgeois historiography is marked by its further shift to the right, the strengthening of conservative tendencies in it, and, in the last 15 years, increased propaganda of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. Historian George Kennan, former US Ambassador in the USSR, wrote with a sense of deep anxiety: "I find the view of the Soviet Union that prevails today in large portions of our governmental and journalistic establishments so extreme, so subjective, so far removed from what any sober scrutiny of external reality would reveal, that it is not only ineffective but dangerous as a guide to political action."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The New York Review of Books*, January 21, 1982, p. 10.

A number of works have been published in the USA throwing light on the sinister role of Edgar Hoover, the former head of the FBI, showing the way in which slanderous fabrications about a "Communist plot" were used to undermine bourgeois democracy. In particular, Fred Cook, who gathered extensive materials about the FBI, published a book entitled *The FBI Nobody Knows*.<sup>1</sup> He convincingly explains the reasons why the idea was inculcated in the American population that Hoover was the only infallible statesman rendering an invaluable service to the people. Hoover, he writes, never tried to fight the true kings of the criminal world, which actually was what the FBI had been set up for. Rather, he preferred to hunt Communists and progressive Americans.

Books by other authors give similar assessments of the FBI and its former chief.

In the same period, numerous works were published in the USA distorting the goals and the activities of the US Communist Party. Thus, Philip J. Jaffe in *The Rise and Fall of American Communism* expresses regret that Browder was expelled from the Party, which in his view led to a fall in the prestige and influence of the CP USA.<sup>2</sup>

Anti-communism spreads to secondary schools and higher educational establishments. Textbooks are written in which the history of the USA is treated in an anti-communist spirit (as, for instance, the books by H. Bradley, G. and D. Brown, E. Cornwell, J. Garraty, G. Goodman, A. Hamby, H. Higgins, R. Kirkendall, P. Magrath, D. Malone, B. Rauch). The USA is presented in these works as the great arsenal of democracy and the defender of the small peoples against the world Communist plot.

D. Saposs also holds anti-communist positions. He praises the hard anti-Communist stance of the AFL-CIO leadership and approves of their policy of holding the labor movement within the framework of "law and order". Despite obvious facts, D. Saposs asserts that the reformist goals of union

<sup>1</sup> F.J. Cook, *The FBI Nobody Knows*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1964, p. 95, 231.

<sup>2</sup> Ph. J. Jaffe, *The Rise and Fall of American Communism*, Horizon Press, New York, 1975, p. 230.

bureaucracy became in these times the ideology of the American labor movement.<sup>1</sup>

Sidney Lens, a realistically minded American researcher, pointed out in his book *The Futile Crusade. Anti-Communism as American Credo* that the US ruling circles used anti-communism to achieve the objectives of their reactionary domestic and aggressive foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> He wrote of the grievous consequences of anti-communism in the US internal political life: the reactionary Smith, McCarren and Taft-Hartley acts and persecution of Americans by various committees and subcommittees.<sup>3</sup>

Quite a few American authors present a false picture of the development of socialist countries, idealizing at the same time the institutions of bourgeois society, which is said to be based on equality, justice and law.

For instance, John Galbraith asserts in his book *The New Industrial State* that new industrial society managed by the technical intelligentsia, the so-called technostructure, had come to replace the old capitalism of Rockefellers, Morgans, Harrimans, Fords and other captains of industry. "Galbraith," wrote the Soviet economists N.N. Inozemtsev, S.M. Menshikov, and A.G. Mileikovsky, "comes out as an advocate of big business, that is to say, as an apologist of monopoly capital".<sup>4</sup> His reasoning "does not go beyond the framework of the theory, traditional in bourgeois political economy, to the effect that all evils of capitalism can be eliminated without changing the system of production, merely through reforms in the sphere of distribution".<sup>5</sup>

Richard Barber, lecturer at the Yale Law School and counsel for the Senate Anti-Trust Subcommittee, also believes that business is changing its essence and that old preferences are receding into the past.<sup>6</sup> On the question who con-

<sup>1</sup> D.J. Saposs, *Case Studies in Labor Ideology. Monograph No. 3. American Labor Ideology*, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1971, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lens, *The Futile Crusade. Anti-Communism as American Credo*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1964, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143, 149.

<sup>4</sup> See J.K. Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, Moscow, 1969, Introduction, p. 10 (in Russian).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> R.J. Barber, *The American Corporation. Its Power, Its Money, Its Politics*, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1970, p. 5.

trols American corporations, Barber writes that control over them has undergone such changes that it is no longer possible to identify who actually is the owner of modern major corporations.<sup>1</sup>

Bourgeois scholars are not averse to criticizing capitalism from the liberal positions, but they cannot afford an objective analysis of the situation. At best, they touch on individual issues, avoiding the main ideological principles and propositions. They may refer to unemployment, poverty, inflation, or hold forth on the usefulness of reform, but their goal in all this is to refurbish the façade of capitalism without changing its basis, muffling, meanwhile, its internal contradictions. The works of the economist R. Heilbroner are a typical example.

Declaring corporations an inevitable evil, he suggests measures for eliminating the adverse actions of the monopolies. He believes it possible to improve the work of the boards of company directors, to punish employers for breaking the law, and to ban inciting race disturbances and ethnic strife among workers.<sup>2</sup>

Bourgeois ideologists speak of the transformation of capitalism into a "mixed economy", "consumer society", "industrial state", "affluent society", "great society", "technocracy", etc. But the resources of the world's richest country are still controlled by monopoly groups and are wasted on the production of weapons and luxury items. At the same time, the vital social problems, such as housing, health service and schools, are regarded as secondary in importance. As Howard Zinn pointed out, "at the top of the economic scale was enormous wealth, at the bottom, poverty—and hunger".<sup>3</sup>

Despite obvious facts, many bourgeois researchers keep asserting that the USA is becoming an industrial society subsequently transformed into technetronic society. Professor Benjamin Kleinberg believes that the USA in the late 20th century "moves into the postindustrial stage".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>2</sup> *In the Name of Profit...*, ed. by R.A. Heilbroner, M. Mintz, C. McCarthy, New York, 1972, pp. 257, 258, 263.

<sup>3</sup> H. Zinn, *Postwar America: 1945-1971*, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., Indianapolis and New York, 1973, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> B.S. Kleinberg, *American Society in the Postindustrial Stage. Technocracy, Power, and the End of Ideology*, Columbus, Ohio, 1973, p. V.

In this connection B. Kleinberg, just as B. Silverman and M. Janowitch, speaks of the emergence of a working class that ceases to be the motive force of revolutionary change in society. These ideas are shared by the American sociologists Clark Kerr, John Dunlop, Charles Meyers, Seymour Lipset, Daniel Bell. The purpose of these assertions is to discredit the idea of the socialist revolution, to prove that radical changes in the forms of ownership are not needed, that they are not necessary.

Many bourgeois scholars glorifying American democracy are now looking for new aspects to praise the two-party bourgeois system in the USA. In this connection, the decrepit myth about unlimited opportunities for the ordinary man in the USA is renovated. Characteristic in this respect is Sunny Thomas's book *Jimmy Carter. From Peanuts to Presidency*.<sup>1</sup>

It was not accidental that Carter turned to God, asserted another author, N. Nielsen. In his view, Carter was called upon to give a new lease on life to the "American dream" and the faith in the special mission of America undermined by the Watergate scandal.<sup>2</sup>

Jimmy Carter himself wrote a book pretentiously called *A Government as Good as Its People*,<sup>3</sup> trying to present his activity as President in a positive light, and to refute the view that his domestic and foreign policies were demagogic and hypocritical.

The ruling circles and the people have different ideas of democracy. "The bourgeoisie," Lenin wrote, "are compelled to be hypocritical and to describe as 'popular government' or democracy in general, or pure democracy, the (*bourgeois*) democratic republic which is, in practice, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the exploiters over the working people."<sup>4</sup>

In recent years, books have been published in the USA criticizing from radical positions bourgeois democracy and

<sup>1</sup> S. Thomas, *Jimmy Carter. From Peanuts to Presidency*, S. Chand and Co., Ltd., New Delhi, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> N.C. Nielsen, *The Religion of President Carter*, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1977, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> J. Carter, *A Government as Good as Its People*, New York, 1977.

<sup>4</sup> V.I. Lenin, " 'Democracy' and Dictatorship", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 370.

exposing the despotic power of the monopolies in the USA. Among the authors are Professor William G. Domhoff of the University of California and Thomas Dye, lecturer at Florida State University.<sup>1</sup> Of course, they do not accept Lenin's definition of classes. But their works are valuable in that they offer proof that the United States is ruled by a group of extremely rich, cosmopolitan-minded big businessmen whose interests extend far beyond the country's borders.<sup>2</sup> Wrote Dye: "A few thousand individuals out of 200 million Americans decide about war and peace, wages and prices, consumption and investment, employment and production, law and justice, taxes and benefits, education and learning, health and welfare."<sup>3</sup>

The growing criticism of the glaring vices of American capitalism had as a side-effect a strengthening of another direction in bourgeois historiography—that of crude falsifications of the essence of Marxist-Leninist theory. It is alleged in some works that Marxism-Leninism is based on the biological laws and that it was from these laws that Marx inferred his propositions on the capitalist exploitation of man by man.<sup>4</sup> The theory of class struggle is thus discarded. Some authors put on a par the two completely incompatible figures of Marx and Keynes.<sup>5</sup> Much in vogue among bourgeois ideologists is the thesis that the ideology of Marxism-Leninism has long come to its end. Professor Wesson of the University of California claims that practice has not borne out a single proposition of Marxism.<sup>6</sup>

These assertions are indications of how widespread and many-sided is bourgeois propaganda intended to discredit the great ideas of the Marxist-Leninist theory.

Various "radical"—and "new left" groups also fiercely attack Marxism-Leninism. They include members of different

<sup>1</sup> W. Domhoff, *The Higher Circles. The Governing Class in America*, New York, 1970; Th. Dye, *Who's Running America? Institutional Leadership in the United States*, Englewood Cliffs, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> W. Domhoff, *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> Th. Dye, *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> D. Fustfeld, *The Age of the Economist. A Popular History from Adam Smith to J.K. Galbraith*, New York, 1968, pp. 82, 84.

<sup>5</sup> P. Mattick, *Marx and Keynes...*, Boston, 1969, pp. 21, 26.

<sup>6</sup> R. Wesson, *Why Marxism? The Continuing Success of a Failed Theory*, New York, 1976, p. 6.

convictions—anarchists, liberals, Trotskyites. Politically, they are opponents of the Marxist concept of the revolution. Their theoretical mainstay is the assertion of the emergence of a working class that has allegedly ceased to be the subject of revolutionary change in society.<sup>1</sup> For instance, Herbert Marcuse wrote a great deal about the vices of capitalism, but at the same time he held that the working class "has much more to lose than its chains".<sup>2</sup> He resolutely objected to the setting up of a mass revolutionary party capable of guiding the masses in the struggle with capitalism.

The same proposition is put forth in Ted Goertzel's book *Political Society*. Calling himself a Marxist, Goertzel tries in fact to revise Marx's theory of classes. Capitalism, in Goertzel's view, follows the path of class appeasement, with the principal contradictions between the classes gradually disappearing. That is in the first place true of the socio-economic differences between workers and capitalists. He writes that in the USA a "new middle class" has emerged in which the revolutionary potential of the former proletariat is dissolved little by little, so that there is "a class conflict which has been legalized, regulated, and made a part of the existing social system".<sup>3</sup>

Right-wing labor theoreticians speak the same language as conservative bourgeois scholars. Former AFL-CIO President George Meany took a line extremely hostile to the progressive forces both in the USA and in the international arena. He criticized the US government for its alleged indifference to the actions of the Soviet Union in foreign policy, calling detente an illusion, and peaceful coexistence—a policy to suit Soviet leaders.<sup>4</sup>

Of considerable interest are works about Walter Reuther, the long-time President of the United Auto Workers. In May 1970, Reuther died in an air crash. After his death, union historians and journalists wrote numerous books and articles about his life and work. Jean Gould and Lorena Hickok wrote a thick volume about Walter Reuther, "with

<sup>1</sup> *The Worker in "Post-Industrial" Capitalism*, New York, p. XXI.

<sup>2</sup> H. Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, Boston, 1972, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> T. Goertzel, *Political Society*, Chicago, 1976, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, January 1976, pp. 1-9.

his awareness of mass mood, his sense of timing and intuitive talent for strategy".<sup>1</sup>

In late 1935, after 2 years in the USSR where the Reuther brothers worked at the auto plant in Gorky, they returned to the USA and joined the movement for establishing the CIO. Walter Reuther was indeed different from labor leaders of the Meany type, especially on international issues. In the last years of his life he condemned the policy of the federation's reactionary leaders aimed to worsen relations in the international labor movement, especially with the trade unions in the USSR.

There is a group of centrist leaders in the US labor movement, but they are outnumbered by conservative elements in the AFL-CIO leadership, who try to subordinate the activities of the federation to the interests of the ruling circles.

The Soviet scholars P.N. Fedoseyev and Yu. P. Frantsev wrote of considerable degradation in bourgeois social science and historiography. They wrote that the theoreticians of imperialism spent a great deal of effort to use history in spreading the bourgeois view of the life of society. This is done with the help of historians who aver that "social science must merely record isolated facts, and that history cannot generalize or reveal certain regular patterns. They have advocated complete liberation of historians from such a prejudice as the idea of historical law".<sup>2</sup> But, as the Soviet philosopher I.S. Kon wrote, if the idea of historical law is rejected, "the idea of the knowability of the historical past falls apart inevitably. The facts of history are countless, and as soon as an objective criterion disappears, selection and systematization of these facts become subject to the historian's individual will."<sup>3</sup>

Justifying this tendency in historical science, some bourgeois ideologists develop unscientific views to the effect that history is an art no different in its nature from fiction. That was precisely the way in which the American

<sup>1</sup> J. Gould, L. Hickok, *Walter Reuther. Labor's Rugged Individualist*, New York, 1972, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from P. Fedoseyev, Yu. Frantsev, *On Methodological Problems of History*, Moscow, 1963, p. 15 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 5, 1968, p. 125.

historian Frederick Teggart approached the problem when he wrote that history is one of the forms of literature and as such is directly opposed to the type of knowledge associated with the word "science".

Professor James Malin of the University of Kansas in his book *On the Nature of History* expressed the view that history must be a simple description of individual phenomena, that it must not attempt even to rise to generalization. According to Malin, not only is history useless, but a historian should take pride in its uselessness.

Yet even this "uselessness" is worth something. President of the American Historical Association Conyers Read said that for most American historians the problem of historical objectivity was a matter of survival, i.e., a "bread and butter problem": history must be written in such a way that those who pay the historians might be pleased with their work. "The task of historical research does not merely lie in gathering the material and describing it," emphasize Fedoseyev and Frantsev, "but in enriching our cognition of the historical experience, in trying to pose and solve the question that expands our historical horizon. It follows that one cannot proceed without raising theoretical, methodological questions."<sup>1</sup>

By no means all US scholars realize the importance of careful selection of historical facts, of their socio-political and economic significance and of the far-reaching consequences of the authors' theoretical concepts. That is a point made, among others, by the American historian Lee Benson. In his description, the study of isolated events unconnected with the general processes of history is an unhistorical approach. In his view, such a method cannot be explained as a result of failures of individual historians—it is a consequence of the methodological difficulties of bourgeois historical science as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

Howard Zinn is also critical of the bourgeois methodology of history. His books denounce the hypocrisy of bourgeois concepts. He believes that history must be closely linked with society's modern political life, and insists that a historian

<sup>1</sup> P. Fedoseyev, Yu. Frantsev, *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

must not be "a passive reporter, studying the combatants of yesterday".<sup>1</sup> The researcher cannot stand aloof from life watching it out of the window, a life in which children die under bombing and suffer from hunger. He must serve the cause of man's perfection. Zinn calls this view of the researcher's task a radical approach to history. "Historical writing is most true when it is appropriate simultaneously to what was in the past, to the condition of the present, and to what should be done in the future."<sup>2</sup>

### Marxist Historians and Economists on the US Labor Movement

In the 1960s and 1970s the working class came into the focus of ideological confrontation in the USA. The ideological opponents of Marxism ranging from bourgeois ideologists to petty-bourgeois, reformist, and ultraleft theoreticians, attacked Karl Marx's well-known thesis of the world historic role of the proletariat as the creator of socialist society, which Lenin singled out as the core of the Marxist doctrine. The US Communist Party attaches special significance to theoretical work, which became especially vigorous in the 1960s and 1970s. Communists are most active in the ideological struggle, fighting for the purity of Marxism-Leninism.

Marxists have made an essential contribution to the polemics on the historic role of the working class. Significant works on this subject have been written by Gus Hall, Henry Winston, Hyman Lumer, Herbert Aptheker, Erik Bert, George Morris, Victor Perlo, Gil Green, and Philip Foner.

Criticizing Walt Rostow's apologia of capitalism in *The Stages of Economic Growth. A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Lumer wrote: "Rostow has concocted a theory in the service of US imperialism, a theory designed to paint a dying system as the very threshold of Utopia and to cover up its contradictions and blemishes."<sup>3</sup>

In his work "Barometer Points to Stormy Weather", Gus Hall analyzes the economic, social and political essence

<sup>1</sup> H. Zinn, *The Politics of History*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1970, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> H. Zinn, *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> H. Lumer, "Mr. Rostow's Strange World", *Political Affairs*, December 1960, p. 61.

of American imperialism. He refutes the ill-devised constructs of the bourgeois apologists and reveals the true outlook for the future development of the USA. "The future of US monopoly capitalism is programmed by the inherent laws of capitalist development. Consequently, the basic class contradiction will continue to sharpen."<sup>1</sup>

The Communist Party USA regards petty-bourgeois theories as a serious danger and fights them on the ideological front. Criticizing the theories of petty-bourgeois and ultraleft ideologists, of the theoreticians of the "New Left", American Communists showed that "such theories lead inevitably to a policy of inactivity, of hopelessness, of capitulation".<sup>2</sup> The history of the "New Left" convincingly showed the correctness of these conclusions. Marcuse and his followers did a great harm to the development of the general democratic movement in the USA in the 1960s. They split that movement, weakened and disoriented it.

Gus Hall's book, *The Revolutionary Labor Movement and Imperialism Today* is of great theoretical interest. It is aimed against anti-Marxist theories of bourgeois ideologists. Gus Hall offers a comprehensive class characterization of modern bourgeois society, showing up its anti-people essence, the destructive effect that militarization has on US economy, politics and ideology, and the way in which it fosters racist and chauvinistic attitudes. Gus Hall's works are a contribution to the development of Lenin's theory of imperialism at the present stage, they indicate the prospects of the revolutionary labor movement and are pervaded with profound optimism and faith in the victory of democracy and social progress in the USA.

In his works *For a Meaningful Alternative* and *How to Stop the Monopolies* Gus Hall states that the class struggle continues to sharpen, and calls for a mobilization of all forces to create an anti-monopoly coalition.<sup>3</sup>

In 1980, Gus Hall's book *Basics for Peace, Democracy*

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, "Barometer Points to Stormy Weather", *World Marxist Review*, No. 4, 1976, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Affairs*, August 1963, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> G. Hall, *For a Meaningful Alternative*, New York, 1969; *idem.*, *How to Stop the Monopolies*, New York, 1979.



and *Social Progress*<sup>1</sup> was published. It has a special section on ideological struggle which, as the work points out, goes on at various levels and in different forms, assuming a global character. Special prominence is given to a critique of anti-labor policies.

In 1979, Gus Hall's pamphlet was published entitled *Labor Up-Front in the People's Fight Against the Crisis*, where he wrote: "Because the working class is the pivotal force in the struggle for reforms, for social progress and in the struggle for socialism, our Party places its main emphasis and focus on the working class."<sup>2</sup>

Gus Hall's new work *What the Reds Say Today*<sup>3</sup> speaks of the Party's style of work; the author elaborates on various theoretical problems, emphasizing that the Party's theoretical work must reflect the changes in the modern world. He stresses that this is no time for abstract research; theoretical works detached from the concrete class struggle are meaningless.<sup>4</sup>

Henry Winston, National Chairman of the CP USA, contributes a great deal to the ideological struggle put up by the Party. His works *Strategy for a Black Agenda*, *Strategy for a People's Alternative*, and *Class, Race and Black Liberation*<sup>5</sup> dealt a heavy blow against the racist, nationalistic and extreme left theories and concepts disrupting the unity of white and colored working people in their anti-monopoly struggle. Winston sharply criticized the idea of "Black capitalism".

Of great significance for the historiography of the US labor movement are the works of the Marxist historian Philip Foner. His fundamental work in several volumes, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, covering the period from the times of the colonial wars to World War II, is a profound scientific study of the

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, *Basics for Peace, Democracy and Social Progress*, New York, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> G. Hall, *Labor Up-Front in the People's Fight Against the Crisis*, International Publishers, New York, 1979, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> G. Hall, *What the Reds Say Today*, New York, 1981.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> H. Winston, *Strategy for a Black Agenda*, International Publishers, New York, 1973; *Strategy for a People's Alternative*, New York, 1955; *Class, Race and Black Liberation*, New York, 1977.

emergence, formation and development of the US working class. In 1974 he published another book, *Organized Labor and the Black Workers*.

In his works, Foner also concentrates on modern problems. In the early 1970s, when the attitude of the working class to the war in Vietnam was a very acute issue, he published the book *American Labor and the Indo-China War. The Growth of Union Opposition*.<sup>1</sup>

George Morris spent over 40 years studying the problems of the modern American labor movement. He regularly publishes articles on vital issues of the working people's life in the newspapers *Daily World*, *People's World* and the journal *Political Affairs*. In the second volume of the present work we have already discussed his books, *American Labor, Which Way?* (1961), *CIA and American Labor; The Subversion of the AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy* (1967). In later years he published a number of new works.<sup>2</sup>

George Morris's books touch on many important issues of the US labor movement. His works carry a great deal of criticism of the splitting policies of quasi-Marxist groups. These small groups with a penchant for revolutionary phraseology preach in actual fact anti-communism and bring discord in the labor movement.

In considering the basic issues of the US unions, George Morris came to the conclusion that at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s there was a growth in the opposition of union membership to the right-wing leaders, and that independent rank and file action was becoming a firm trend.<sup>3</sup>

Gil Green's book on American labor unions offers an analysis of the development of the labor movement in the USA after World War II. The author studies the present situation in the US unions against the background of

<sup>1</sup> Ph. Foner, *American Labor and the Indo-China War. The Growth of Union Opposition*, New York, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> G. Morris, *Rebellion in the Unions. A Handbook for Rank and File Action*, New York, 1971; *Social Democrats—USA in the Service of Reaction*, New York, 1976; *USSR-USA Trade Unions Compared*, Moscow, 1979.

<sup>3</sup> G. Morris, *Rebellion in the Unions*, pp. 118, 119, 139, 143.

the deepening crisis of capitalism. At the same time he shows the organizational disunity and reactionary essence of the policies of the right-wing union leaders who spread anti-communism in the movement and weaken its unity.<sup>1</sup>

In his work *The Unstable Economy: Booms and Recessions in the United States since 1945*, the economist Victor Perlo described the effect of the scientific and technological revolution on the US working class—the speed-up and growing exploitation. Perlo came to the conclusion that the rate of exploitation of US workers had increased by nearly 74 per cent in 10 years.<sup>2</sup>

While studying complex problems of the present-day US economy, Perlo at the same time directs the work of the commission on economy at the Central Committee, CP USA. In one of his pamphlets he points out that in 1968, the working people of the USA paid 66 per cent of the federal taxes, and the capitalists, only 34 per cent. Workers give away in taxes 3 out of each 8 dollars earned.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the CP USA, the book *Highlights of a Fighting History. 60 Years of the Communist Party USA* was put out in New York. It is a documentary history of the Party, comprising important decisions of the Party, separate works and articles by its prominent leaders, a history of the Party written by men and women who took part in its activities.<sup>3</sup>

The work on program propositions that the Party began in the early 1960s was an important stage in the struggle for determining its political line with regard to the working class. As a result of that work, a new program of the CP USA was adopted in May 1970. It emphasized that the working class today "constitutes the overwhelming majority of all who are gainfully employed".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. Green, *What's Happening to Labor*, New York, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> V. Perlo, *The Unstable Economy: Booms and Recessions in the United States since 1945*, International Publishers, New York, 1974, pp. 26-28.

<sup>3</sup> *Highlights of a Fighting History. 60 Years of the Communist Party USA*, International Publishers, New York, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> *New Program of the Communist Party U.S.A.*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1970, p. 43.

While valuing highly the positive aspects of the organized labor movement, the Communist Party does not idealize the US working class. The American Communists indicate its weak points, its lagging behind the proletariat of other developed capitalist countries in the level of class awareness and political organization, and point out a number of objective and subjective reasons for its ideological backwardness.

The 1973 conference was of special significance in the Party's theoretical work and its struggle against anti-Marxist theories of the role of the working class in American history. It was proved in the reports and speeches at the conference that only the working class is capable of defending democracy and being the basis of a broad anti-monopoly coalition in the country.<sup>1</sup> The conference discussed vital theoretical issues of the struggle of the US working class, criticized pseudoscientific anti-labor doctrines, and outlined the practical actions of the Communists aimed at increasing the Party's influence in the working class.<sup>2</sup> The position of the Communist Party on the role of the working class was further developed in its draft new program *The People vs Monopoly*<sup>3</sup>, of which the basic propositions had been worked out by the 22nd Convention in August 1979.

In June 1981, the Central Committee of the Party endorsed the text of the program which was published in January 1982 as the *New Program of the Communist Party USA. The People versus Corporate Power*. This important document defines the strategy and tactics of the Communist Party, and clearly formulates its fundamental principles, views and final goals. It exposes state-monopoly capitalism as the main enemy of the people, and points out the need for radical social changes and the importance of setting up an anti-monopoly coalition, the people's party.

The program speaks of the vanguard role of the working class in a general democratic movement. "The workers as a class are the strongest and most consistent opponent of corporate domination. They are in the best position to lead

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, November 1973, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118-128.

<sup>3</sup> "The People vs Monopoly. Draft Program of the CP USA, 1980", *Political Affairs*, April 1980, pp. 32-38.

all other social strata victimized by the Rockefellers, Morgans, Duponts and Fords in a united crusade for social justice."<sup>1</sup>

The Communist Party thus defines its position towards workers and labor unions: "Communists stand for working-class and trade union unity, which are preconditions for winning effective working-class economic and political power."<sup>2</sup>

The program brings out the essence of the concept of unity of the left and centrist forces: "The Left forces can be an influence in determining trade union policies only if they work with other trade unionists... A working unity between the Left and such Center forces is essential. Such unity is necessary to win the Center forces away from the influence of the Right-wing practitioners of class collaboration".<sup>3</sup>

The US Communist Party and American Marxists make a valuable contribution to the development of Marxist-Leninist theory, analyzing the complex processes in the socio-economic and political spheres, exposing the pseudoscientific bourgeois, reformist and revisionist theories. The Party's efforts are directed toward raising the level of class consciousness of the working people of the USA.

The program documents of the CP USA are permeated by profound optimism and belief in the high potential of the US working class.

#### Studies by Soviet Scholars

The 7-volume collective effort by Soviet authors, *The International Working Class Movement. Problems of History and Theory*, is a major event in the study of the ideological and theoretical issues of the labor movement. This fundamental study shows the great, insuperable strength of the theory of Marxism-Leninism and outlines the strategy and tactics of the communist and workers' parties in the struggle for the liberation of the working class and of all the

<sup>1</sup> *New Program of the Communist Party USA. The People versus Corporate Power*, New York, New Outlook Publishers, 1982, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

oppressed working people from the capitalist yoke. On the basis of Marxist-Leninist methodology, it shows the organic link between the general laws of class struggle in the capitalist socio-economic formation and their concrete, specific manifestations in a given nation. The history and evolution of the mass labor movement in the USA emerges as an inalienable part of the struggle of the international proletariat, and the long-term objective and subjective factors are taken into account, which make a great impact on the forms of the American labor movement.

The first 2 volumes of the present study by the Institute of World History, the USSR Academy of Sciences, deal with the problems and tendencies of the US labor movement in the same light. They trace the development of class struggle in American society through nearly half a century (1918-1965) in close connection with the economic and social changes both in the USA and in the international arena.

Among the works of the last two decades, books by T.T. Timofeyev, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, should be mentioned in the first place.<sup>1</sup> From the Marxist positions, they expose the falsification of the basic factors of class relations and the class struggle in the USA by bourgeois and various other anti-Marxist authors. Analyzing the complex and contradictory processes of upsurges and setbacks in the American labor movement, Timofeyev convincingly shows that the interests of monopoly capital and the working class are irreconcilable.

The Institute of the International Labor Movement, the USSR Academy of Sciences, published 2 collective overviews<sup>2</sup> which studied the changes in the economic and socio-political relations in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s,

<sup>1</sup> T.T. Timofeyev, *The Proletariat Against the Monopolies: Essays in the Class Struggle and General Democratic Movements in the USA*, Moscow, 1967; *idem.*, *The Working Class and the Crisis of Anti-Communism. On Some Vital Problems of the Ideological and Political Struggle*, Moscow, 1977; *id.*, *The Working Class in the Focus of Ideological and Theoretical Confrontation*, Moscow, 1979 (all in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The USA: The Socio-Political Crisis, Problems in the Labor and Democratic Movement*, Moscow, 1972; *The USA: Aggravation of the Social Contradictions and the Mass Democratic Movements*, Moscow, 1980 (both in Russian).

showing new phenomena in the union and democratic movements.

The USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of World Economy and International Relations and the Institute of US and Canadian Studies jointly put out monographs studying changes in the social structure of American society and tendencies in the development of the labor, youth and Black movements.<sup>1</sup>

Many monographs by individual authors are centered on the analysis of the inner contradictions of American state-monopoly capitalism and the study of factors determining the aggravation of class contradictions.

Investigations in the class consciousness and social psychology of the US working class are a fresh development in Soviet American studies. Mention should be made here of the joint monograph edited by Yu.A. Zamoshkin and E.Ya. Batalov, and the monographs by S.M. Askoldova and G.I. Vainshtein.<sup>2</sup>

The work by B.Ya. Mikhailov<sup>3</sup> offers a critique of the ideological foundations of the US labor movement bourgeois historiography, of the apologia of imperialism and its anti-Communist and anti-Soviet bias.

Works by I.I. Beglov, S.A. Yershov, A.A. Fursenko and N.D. Gauzner are devoted to the study of the concentration and centralization of monopoly capital and intensification of the exploitation of the working class.<sup>4</sup> The authors analyze the growing economic and political domination of monopoly capital and the increasing range of the means and methods

<sup>1</sup> *The Socio-Political Movements in the USA (the 1960s and early 1970s)*, Moscow, 1974; *The Mass Protest Movements in the USA*, Moscow, 1978 (both in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Contemporary Political Consciousness in the USA*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1984; S.M. Askoldova, *The Formation of the Ideology of the American Trade Unionism*, Moscow, 1975; G.I. Vainshtein, *American Workers: Changes in the Social Consciousness*, Moscow, 1977 (both in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> B.Ya. Mikhailov, *Problems of the Labor Movement in the USA in American Bourgeois Literature, 1945-1975*, Moscow, 1977 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> I.I. Beglov, *The USA: Property and Power*, Moscow, 1971; S.A. Yershov, *The USA: The Development of the Forms and Methods of Capitalist Exploitation*, Moscow, 1974; A.A. Fursenko, *The Rockefeller Dynasty*, Leningrad, 1970; N.D. Gauzner, *The Scientific and Technological Progress and the Working Class of the USA*, Moscow, 1968 (all in Russian).

of state-monopoly exploitation of the working class.

The growing role of the American state in economic and social spheres is studied in the works of a number of Soviet authors, among them N.V. Sivachov, A.A. Popov and Ye.P. Kassirova.<sup>1</sup> The authors cite numerous facts to show the way in which the modern labor policy grew into a system of government regulation of labor relations in which the institutions, principles and methods are of long-term nature and basically independent from changes in the administrations and parties in power. They point out anti-working class trends inherent in the state-monopoly labor policy, analyze the factors which determine the features of social maneuvering of the bourgeois parties and governments in various historical periods.

In the 15 years under consideration, a large group of Soviet historians and economists studied the key issues in the modern US labor movement. Reference here is to works of V.P. Androsov, G.D. Gevorgyan, Ya. N. Keremetsky, I.N. Kravchenko, M.I. Lapitsky, A.A. Mkrtchyan, and P.A. Shishkin.<sup>2</sup> The researchers are primarily concerned with changes in the organization and structure of the unions, their inner contradictions, and their economic and socio-political relations with the monopolies, the state and various social movements. An important development in the study of American unions is the analysis of polarization of forces in the unions, of the growing discontent of the masses with the conciliatory policies of the right-wing leaders, and of the new tendencies most clearly manifested in the rank-and-file movement demanding greater independence from the two leading parties of the US monopoly capital. The authors

<sup>1</sup> N.V. Sivachov, *The Labor Policy of the US Government during the Second World War*, Moscow, 1974; A.A. Popov, *The USA: The State and the Trade Unions*, Moscow, 1974; Ye.P. Kassirova, *The USA: The Crisis of Social Policies*, Moscow, 1978 (all in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V.P. Androsov, *US Trade Unions Under State-Monopoly Capitalism*, Moscow, 1971; G.D. Gevorgyan, *US Trade Unions and the US Foreign Policy*, Moscow, 1979; Ya.N. Keremetsky, *The USA: Trade Unions in the Struggle Against Capital*, Moscow, 1970; I.N. Kravchenko, *How AFL-CIO Leaders Misdirect the US Workers*, Moscow, 1975; M.I. Lapitsky, *The USA: Unions' Role in Domestic Politics*, Moscow, 1973; A.A. Mkrtchyan, *The Labor Movement in the USA: Modern Problems and Tendencies*, Moscow, 1970; P.A. Shishkin, *Class Struggle in the USA, 1955-1968*, Moscow, 1972 (all in Russian).

comprehensively describe the unions' attitude to the foreign policy and show the sources of anti-communism among the top echelon of labor organizations and also the weakening of the AFL-CIO positions in the international trade union movement.

The work of L.Ya. Mashezerskaya also deals with the themes of the trade union movement.<sup>1</sup> The author studies changes in the economic relations and the economic struggle between labor and capital to trace fresh developments in collective bargaining and the strike movement under the conditions of state-monopoly regulation of labor relations and increased non-economic coercion of the working class.

Of considerable interest are the sections of N.A. Sakharov's book on the growing influence by employers' associations on social relations and the government's labor policy.<sup>2</sup>

The emergence and growth of the Communist Party USA, is a very important theme studied in the past few years by P. S. Petrov, A. A. Grechukhin and V. G. Korionov.<sup>3</sup> They criticize the theory of "American exceptionalism", and expose Browder's right-wing, opportunist and liquidationist practices, the neo-Browderism of the late 1950s, and the sectarianism and dogmatism of the 1960s. Special importance is attached to the ideological and organizational consolidation of the Communist Party in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Black people's movement is discussed in the fundamental works of I. A. Geyevsky, R. F. Ivanov and E. L. Nitoburg. The authors probe deep into the roots of racism and various forms of discrimination against Black Americans and analyze their socio-economic position. Of considerable interest is also the discussion of the maneuvers by the ruling circles on the civil rights issue and their efforts to preserve the racist prejudices in the consciousness of the white population.

<sup>1</sup> L.Ya. Mashezerskaya, *Strikes and Collective Bargaining in the USA*, Moscow, 1981 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> N.A. Sakharov, *Employers' Associations in US Political Life*, Moscow, 1980 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> P.S. Petrov, *The Emergence of the Communist Party USA and Its Struggle for Legal Status*, Moscow, 1971; A.A. Grechukhin, *The Struggle of the Communist Party USA for the Unity of Its Ranks (1927-1972)*, Moscow, 1975; V. G. Korionov, *Striving for the Future. Communists in the Modern World*, Moscow, 1976. (all in Russian).

Another aspect of these studies is research into the Blacks' growing struggle for their rights and their unity of action with labor unions.

There has thus been a considerable extension in the range of Soviet studies in various problems of new economic and social developments in the class struggles in the USA under the conditions of a deepening crisis of American capitalism.

## CONCLUSION

In concluding the present volume, a few words are in order on the general tendencies in the development of class struggle in the USA during more than 60 years.

The Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia made a great impact on all the countries of the world, including the USA. The general crisis of capitalism resulted in greater polarization of the class forces in the country and more acute contradictions between labor and capital. Characteristic of the recent years is the growing influence of multinational corporations in the capitalist world. It leads to further expansion of American capitalism and greater penetration by US monopolies into other countries. As a result of militarization of the economy, the military-industrial complex has become a most important part of the entire state-monopoly mechanism.

The entire recent history evidences the shifting of the center of reaction to the United States. The US working class has been fighting monopolies' encroachments on its gains. The strike movement has remained the workers' main weapon in defending their vital interests.

The state actively interfered in labor relations. In the years of sharp fluctuations in business activity, when conflicts became particularly acute and the confrontation of class forces increasingly irreconcilable, the state apparatus resorted to various methods of suppressing strikes: declaring them illegal, laying off workers and disbanding labor unions. Repression and provocations were used on a wide scale. The ruling circles tried to lull the workers' vigilance, calling on the unions to show restraint and

cooperate with the monopolies. Bourgeois propaganda appealed more and more often to "prudence" and "good will" of the union membership.

The forces of bourgeois science were mobilized in the service of capital, providing various apologist theories of "democratic capitalism", "levelling of incomes", "affluent society", "universal prosperity", "disappearance of the proletariat", etc. etc. Rivers of ink were spent in slandering Marxism-Leninism and falsifying the history and theory of the international Communist movement.

The US ruling circles endeavored to gain full control over the unions and to put an end to their political activity, using the lie of "union monopoly" to intimidate the public.

The economic crisis of 1974-1975 was the most acute one since the Great Depression of the 1930s. It became interwoven with the energy and financial crises. The losses of the American economy amounted to about \$100 billion. Industrial production slumped by 13 per cent. Chronic unemployment grew from 3-4 per cent to 9-10 per cent of the total workforce. Against this background, the assertions by ideologists of capitalism that unemployment was a "natural" and even "socially justified" means of increasing production effectiveness read like a bad joke.

Bourgeois propaganda presents unemployment as capital's response to the workers' "anti-social" behavior. This latter is taken to mean that demands of the unions for wage rises are "self-seeking", "extreme" and incommensurate to the workers' contribution to social production. The ruling circles try to link up the growth of inflation with this demand of the unions, which is a clear attempt to dupe the public.

The two ruling parties did not differ much in their labor policy. All presidential candidates promised to fight poverty and to bring prosperity, but not one of them brought prosperity nearer. Unemployment and poverty still remained the lot of many millions of workers. Mass actions against war, for civil rights and expansion of social programs brought on reprisals from the police and the regular army; FBI provocations against labor organizations also grew in scope.

The Democrats vied with the Republicans in their anti-communist, anti-Soviet, anti-labor and anti-Black policies, both parties' chief concern was with monopoly profits, the



interests of the military-industrial complex and the expansionist tendencies of US imperialism.

The view that a change in the AFL-CIO leadership is needed has been often expressed in the American media in recent years, including the union press. Establishing mutual understanding with the new generation of workers has been top priority. Meany's resignation in the fall of 1979 was by no means unexpected. Even the conservative press explained that event as brought about by the pressure of new forces (the rank-and-file movement above all), which tried to bring new men to the leadership in a number of major unions, a matter of enormous political significance. As Gus Hall wrote: "The social forces that carry out a revolutionary transition never arrive on the scene from the blue. They are never hatched in some isolated hot house. They mature, they become conscious of their historic mission and their collective power, in the struggles around the immediate grievances they face in their daily lives."<sup>1</sup>

In foreign policy, the AFL-CIO leadership headed by George Meany and Lane Kirkland continued in every way to support the aggressive tendencies of the ruling circles. That was manifested, above all, in relation to the war in Vietnam. The Meany group in the AFL-CIO, guided and financed by the CIA, worked to undermine the international trade union movement.

Meany's collaboration with the CIA showed convincingly that the American union bureaucracy betrayed the interests of the world working class while supporting the aggressive plans of American imperialism.

At the same time a number of labor unions condemned the American aggression in Vietnam. In 1967, 34 per cent of the union membership opposed US participation in the Vietnam war, while by the summer of 1972 the percentage rose to 79. Gus Hall was quite right in saying that the struggle of the American people against imperialist aggression reflected the anti-imperialist consciousness of the workers.

The conflict between the United Auto Workers and the

<sup>1</sup> G. Hall, "Class Aspect of the Ecological Crisis", *World Marxist Review*, No. 8, 1972, p. 14.

AFL-CIO leadership produced a great impact. Nearly 4 million organized workers were either expelled from the federation or left it themselves. The Meany clique did grave damage to the unity of the labor movement. Subsequent events led to a complete severance of relations between the federation and the UAW. As early as February 1967, Walter Reuther resigned his post in the federation, and in May 1968 the union left the AFL-CIO. The Auto Workers became one of the principal forces in the struggle of the American unions against US aggression in Vietnam.

The reactionary bosses of the AFL-CIO persist in their attacks on the policy of detente. AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and his associates were delighted at the growing anti-Soviet bias of the US foreign policy, declaring that "detente was dead". The anti-Soviet hysteria in the USA affected even the left wing of the unions, which, before the beginning of 1980, supported the policy of detente and of developing Soviet-American relations. Still, the left wing of the unions is fully resolved to fight for detente, for curbing the arms race and strengthening peace.

Thus, two trends emerged in the US labor unions in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One of them consists of the adherents of "class collaboration" policies and implacable foes of the relaxation of international tension. The reactionary leadership of the AFL-CIO heading this trend is supported by the monopolies and the government and also by certain sections of the working class sharing the ideology of "business" unionism.

The other direction in the movement is determined by the rise in the 1970s of the movement of rank-and-file workers fighting for the class interests of the working people, and against the policy of the reactionary union leaders. It has led to the formation of a left wing in the unions. This trend is viable because it reflects the class interests of workers and the attitudes of their majority on domestic and foreign policies. The left wing fights for the socio-economic interests of the working people proceeding from the understanding that international tension, growing military expenditures and the arms race lead to a decline in the living standards of the popular masses. It was for this reason that it became possible in the late 1970s and early 1980s to create in the USA a movement of mass democratic

organizations independent from the two bourgeois parties and headed by the working class, by the unions, a movement fighting for peace, democracy and social progress.

The US Communist Party, which has traversed a long path, plays a significant role in the struggles of the American working class and of all the working people. All attempts by the reactionaries to destroy the Communist Party have failed. The Party also overcame its internal difficulties, rebuffed both the left extremists and the right-wingers who tried to transform it into an amorphous non-party reformist organization dragging behind the bourgeois parties. Now the Communist Party plays a definite role in the country's political life and its standing with the working class and all working people has been consolidated.

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